Kent on Sunday

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WEEKLY FREE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

North & West edition No 635

EDF ENERGY London and South of England Media Awards

SPORT

Stones cash in on FA Cup heroics

Club net £150,000 for memorable victory

WILDLIFE

Ten years on from fox hunting ban

We examine the impact of 2004's controversial legislation

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Consider the real clout of your spending power

AS MUCH as we would all like to claim otherwise, for those of us juggling jobs and families, the lure of the internet when it comes to shopping is more often that not too great.

After all, the range is enormous, the prices cheaper and there's none of the annoying hustle and bustle which can make a simple trip to the shops a blood pressure-raising experience.

Yet all its benefits are also its harms. The ability to wriggle our mouse and click on a bargain makes us lazy and demanding. The lure of a mere £1 saving on a high street cost will have us scuttling back home to invest online instead.

So what, you may ask? That's progress and a good thing surely? And you'd be absolutely right. After all, we live in a capitalist society and those who can deliver to a demand at the best price will inevitably emerge triumphant.

But the harm comes from the destruction of our town centres and our high streets. We may not mean to, but every purchase we make online is a purchase which once upon a time used to go to the shops which serve our communities.

It may be, of course, that this is simply the way of things and we must accept it. Or, it may be that we should perhaps just re-examine our habits now and if we can invest just 20 per cent of the money we would have spent online in a local store, it could mean the retail facilities we've taken for granted for generations will be able to survive.

Our Shop Local! campaign continues this week and we'd urge everyone to give thought to where they spend their money in the run up to Christmas. Because if there's one thing we must accept now, it is that if we don't use it, we really may lose it.

Have a great weekend.



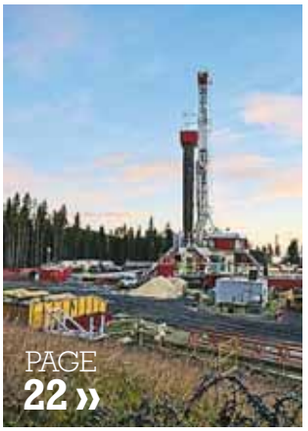
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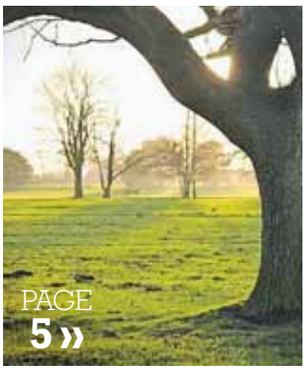
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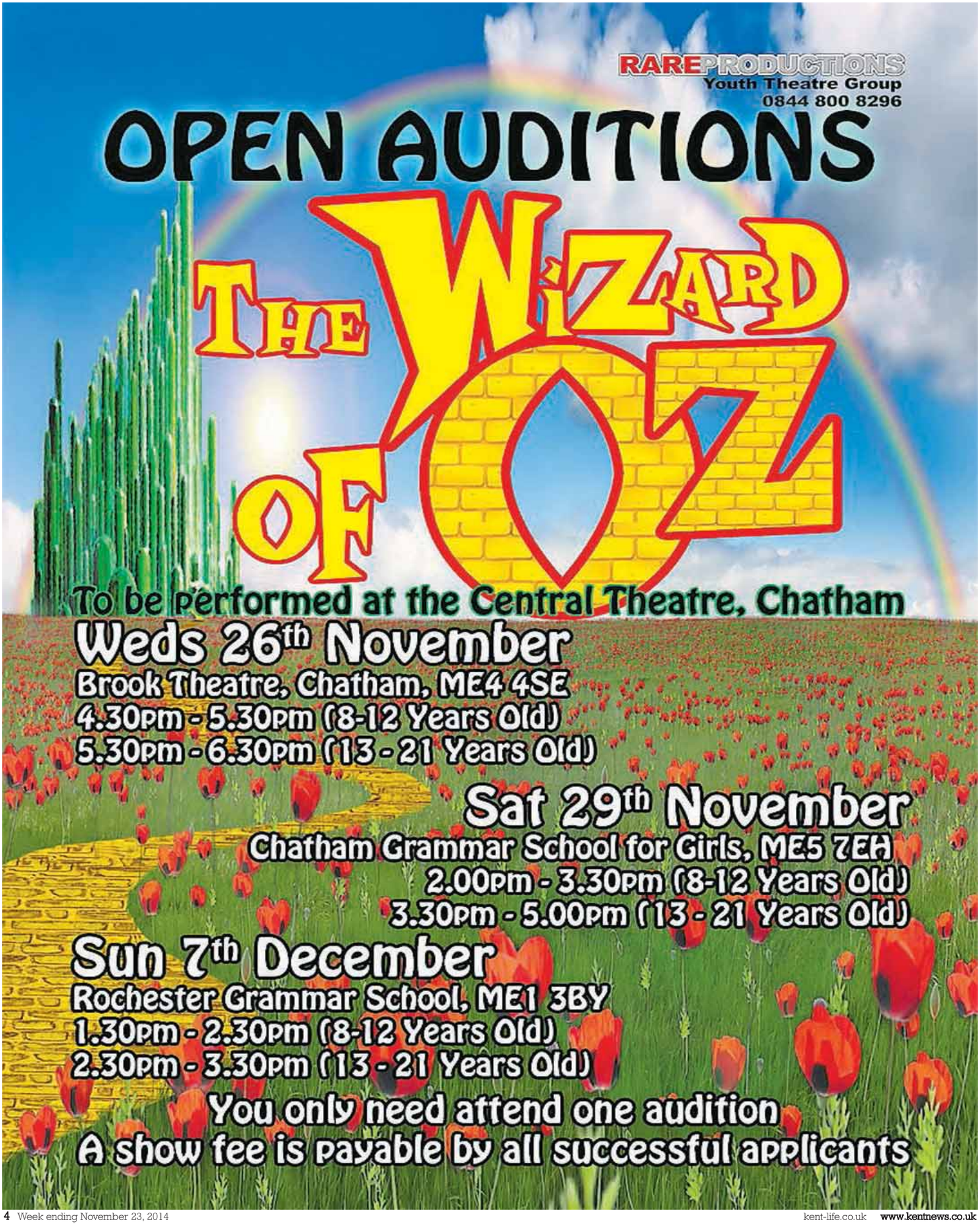
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Cup glory for Stones nets them £150,000 cash pot

by Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk



WEMBLEY WAY: Maidstone United's FA Cup dream will continue against Wrexham in the second round

MAIDSTONE United fans streamed on to the pitch on Thursday night as the club came close to eclipsing the political drama unfolding just up the road in Rochester, by springing one of the biggest shocks in their history.

As Mark Reckless and Nigel Farage nervously awaited the result of the Rochester & Strood by-election under the glare of the nation's media (details on page 14-16), a sell-out crowd flocked to the Gallagher Stadium in the county town to watch the non-league side reach the second round the FA Cup.

The Ryman Premier League side did so at the expense of League 2 side Stevenage - and with the added pressure of the live TV cameras, which saw the crunch match beamed live on BT Sports.

The Stones emerged 2-1 victors with a last gasp winner with just three minutes remaining.

It sparked scenes of delirium for the club which created FA Cup history by hosting the game on its state-of-the-art 3G artificial pitch.

Maidstone and the Weald MP Helen Grant said: "This was an historic day for the club and I'm delighted to see them into the second round of the FA Cup."

The club will certainly cash-in on its heroics.

In addition to prize money and increased gate receipts for the game - Thursday night's match was a replay after the plucky minnows had held the professional outfit to a draw two weeks ago - the club will receive tens of thousands of pounds for allowing the TV cameras in.

The club says it has pocketed around £150,000 so far for the cup run and intends to invest the takings into improving its ground with a new stand.

Co-owner Terry Casey said: "We don't want to just plough the money into the playing squad like so many others do and see it disappear.

"We want to use the money wisely so we're looking at building another stand at the Gallagher Stadium."

The club's next trip will be to Wales in the second round to face Conference Premier side and former league side Wrexham. The two meet on Saturday, December 6.

The Stones certainly left it late on Thursday. After going a goal up after just two minutes and leading 1-0 at half-time, they were pegged back within moments of the second half starting, as it looked like the visitors were taking control.

But they never gave up hope and a second goal from striker Frannie Collin in the 88th minute sparked scenes of jubilation.

Jail for 'idiotic' driver who gatecrashed race at Brands Hatch circuit

A 22-year-old who dodged security to drive his girlfriend's car on to the track during a race meeting at the legendary Brands Hatch circuit, has been jailed for eight months.

Jack Cottle was arrested after footage of him driving a VW Polo on to the track during a race emerged on YouTube in June, attracting tens of thousands of hits and propelling him into the headlines.

It then sparked a police investigation.

Cottle, of Durgates, Wadhurst, East Sussex, had pleaded guilty to a charge of causing a public nuisance by driving on to a live racing circuit causing it to be stopped and putting competitors in harm's way at Maidstone Crown Court.

He drove his girlfriend's car onto the Brands Hatch race track during the final 30 minutes of the four hour long Fun Cup race on June 14.

The labourer also had two passengers in the vehicle at the time – one of whom can be heard clearly pleading with Cottle to stop in the YouTube video.

When sentenced, the presiding judge said that Cottle had 'endangered many lives' and that his actions were 'premeditated and inexcusable'.

The disruption was estimated to have cost the racers a total of £4,200.

Jonathan Palmer, chief executive of MSV, owners of the Brands Hatch circuit, said: "I am really pleased that the police and the court have quite rightly taken such a tough stance on this deliberately reckless act, which endangered the lives of the drivers racing on the circuit and the volunteer track marshals, not to mention Jack Cottle and his passengers.

"His idiotic and selfish behaviour – aggravated by his unrepentant attitude in subsequent media coverage - received much immediate condemnation. His conviction and prison sentence will serve to reinforce the message that this kind of antisocial behaviour is not only stupid, but will lead to prosecution."

Whales create a splash after heading to Sheppey coast

A POD of around 28 whales, each around 25ft long, had to be diverted after they were spotted off the Sheppey coast.

The young pilot whales were seen near Sheerness.

They were spotted by marine engineer Dave Redwood, who was despatched by Peel Ports which runs the local docks.

He told us: "I have never seen anything like it – ever.

"It looked like one of them could have been sick and was heading for the shore. In the end, we had four boats on the scene, and we gentle herded them back out to sea. It was an amazing sight – a truly once in a lifetime event."

Around four whales have been found grounded on Sheppey's coastline over recent years.

Hospice confirms new CEO to take over in February

PILGRIMS Hopices has confirmed the appointment of Cate Russell as its new chief executive officer.

She replaces Steve Auty who resigned following the controversial decision to phase out its in-bed care at the Canterbury hospice.

Such was the backlash from the local community, the hospice was forced to reverse its plans.

With over 20 years of experience in the health and pharmaceutical industry, Mrs Russell will take over the role in February.

Richard Davis, chair of trustees at the charity, said: "I look forward to working with her to ensure that Pilgrims Hospices is at the heart of the local communities it serves, as we continue to deliver the highest quality hospice care possible."

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seven days

Stories which made the headlines @kentnews.co.uk during the past week

Family duo scoop £1m Euromillions cash prize

A FATHER and daughter have scooped a £1 million win in the EuroMillions draw.

Gwen Kiley, 44 and her dad, Bob, 78, from Ashford, are among the first to win in the new EuroMillions Mega Friday draw.

Ms Kiley and her two teenage children also pocketed a holiday on a luxury private island too.

She said: ''This is an amazing opportunity, it feels like a dream.

''The money is quite simply life-changing and the holiday experience will be beyond our wildest imagination.

''Not bad for a last minute decision and a couple of quid. I still can't believe it.''

Mote Park seeks money projects to help off-set mounting financial costs

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

MOTE Park could find itself home to high wires, crazy golf and car parking charges as Maidstone council chiefs admitted they were looking at a variety of ways to help generate funds to balance out budget cuts.

Maidstone Borough Council has now started a consultation process into how to raise money from the borough's parks – the best known of which is the sprawling Mote Park.

It comes as the council looks to try and find overall savings of £3.4million over the next five years due to a reduction in central government funding.

Among the ideas being considered are a new aerial ropeway and high wire – probably along the lines of the popular Go Ape attraction at Leeds Castle – crazy golf, the popular segway two-wheeled machines and 'nominal' car parking charges.

However, it states no decision will be made until after the consultation is complete.



FUNDING: Maidstone's Mote Park

Maidstone council's cabinet member for community and leisure services, John Perry, said: "We're determined not to cut the budget for looking after our parks – they're far too important.

"But that means that we need to find ways to make money to protect and improve them, which is why we're asking residents for their views on different ways of generating income."

Mote Park has seen visitor numbers rise from 650,000 in 2009 to 1.1 million in 2014 – almost a 70 per cent increase, taking visitor numbers to more than those received by Leeds Castle or the Houses of Parliament.

That increase in numbers is testament to the popularity of the park following a £2.5 million restoration project in 2012, but also means that maintenance costs in the park are much higher.

More than £1 million of essential upgrades are needed in the next ten years alone – on top of the day-to-day budget.

The survey is available online at www.maidstone.gov.uk/consultations. All contributions should be made prior to December 4.



OFF: Tory leader John Gilbey

City council leader decides to step down

JOHN Gilbey, leader of Canterbury City Council, has confirmed he will step down at next year's elections.

The Conservative leader, who represents the Blean Forest ward, has been leader since 2007 and a councillor since 2003.

He says his decision is motivated by a desire to see more of his family and to travel.

Cllr Gilbey, who lives in Kingston with his wife Carol, said: "I actually decided after the last election that I would not stand again.

"We have family in Jakarta and New York and family in Welwyn Garden City and we want to spend more time with them.

"There are seven grandchildren, aged between 13 and three and while we see the Welwyn ones more often, for the others it is just once a year.

"There are things we haven't seen and would like to – New Zealand, parts of America – and we have family and friends across the planet that we haven't been able to visit."

No decision about how will take will be made until after the election in May 2015.

He denied a decision to bring in a committee system at the council was behind his decision.

"I hope it works," he said.

Praise for police for better crime recording

KENT Police has been praised for making improvements in the way it records crime – after being criticised last year for not doing it properly.

A report in February 2013 found ''the force had a target-driven culture that led to some officers pursuing crimes based on how easy they were to solve rather than their seriousness or their impact on the victim''.

But a major drive to reform the way it recorded crime, spearheaded by police and crime commissioner Ann Barnes, has now seen it become one of the best in the country with 96 per cent of crime accurately recorded.

The report said: ''HMIC therefore concludes that the people of Kent can have confidence in Kent Police's crime figures, although the force will need to continue to make improvements and maintain focus to ensure the continued accuracy of crime recording in Kent.''

Chief Constable Alan Pughsley said: ''Our focus is on doing what is right for the victim.''

Web cam pervert is sentenced to jail term

A FORMER teaching assistant from Ashford is starting a three-year jail sentence for sexual offences against children after pretending to be a girl and tricking them into performing sex acts on a web cam.

Robert Iles, of Magpie Hall Road, Stubbs Cross, was working as a teaching assistant at Great Chart Primary School at the time of his arrest in April, 2013.

He was charged with inciting two 12-year-old boys and one 15-year-old boy to engage in sexual activity via a web cam after grooming them on social media and pretending to be a teenage girl.

In addition to his sentence he is also subject to a Sexual Offences Prevention Order for 10 years. Iles was sentenced at Canterbury Crown Court.

He was also a member of Kennington Cricket Club. Club president Peter Grant commented: ''At no stage were Robert's activities at the club part of the police investigation nor were any club officials contacted by police.''

Blackadder vote for Farage movie role

BLACKADDER star Rowan Atkinson has been voted the man best placed to portray Ukip leader Nigel Farage in a film.

In the week the political leader saw his party's second MP elected at the Rochester and Strood by-election, a poll for ComRes polling consultants saw the rubber-faced comic named the top choice.

Mr Atkinson, also known for his role as Mr Bean, is best known for his portrayal of Edmund Blackadder a brilliantly funny, cynically opportunistic who always has a cunning plan.

Second in the list was Alan Rickman with Sean Bean coming third.

However, despite Mr Farage's remarkable rise through the political ranks, perhaps the best piece of news is that there are no plans yet to make a big screen story of his life.

Mr Farage will be standing for Ukip in South Thanet at the general election in May, 2015, a seat currently held by the Conservative Laura Sandys.

She has confirmed she will be stepping down.

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agenda

What will make next week's headlines...

Apprentice candidate eyes £250k top prize

KINGS Hill solicitor Felipe Alviar-Baquero will be fighting it out to remain in BBC show The Apprentice this Wednesday after once again surviving the chop.

The 33-year-old was one of the contestants to jet out to New York for last week's task - creating and marketing a new soft drink in the US.

However, he remains a 20-1 outsider to earn a £250,000 investment from Lord Sugar.

His hopes were delivered a blow this week though, by Lord Sugar's advisor Nick Hewer. He said in an interview: "He's one of the kindest contestants we've ever had and perhaps the one with the greatest integrity. And he's not an egotist.



"Although that may count against him. Because I'm afraid that in this process ego, sometimes, is more valuable than talent."

Claire Tiltman murder trial enters third week

THE Claire Tiltman murder case will continue at the Inner London Crown Court this week.

Former milkman Colin Ash-Smith stands charged with the murder of the teenager - stabbed to death as she walked along an alleyway close to her home in Greenhithe on January 18, 1993.

She had turned 16 just days before her death.

The 46-year-old has pleaded not guilty to the charges, insisting he has an alibi for the night of the murder.

The case is now entering its third week. It is expect to conclude no later than mid-December.

...also

Quiz your health chiefs

SENIOR figures at the NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group will be taking part in a Q&A session at the Village Hotel in Sandling on Tuesday.

It starts at 1.30pm. Call 01732 375200 to attend and to lodge your question.

KCC consultation ends

THE closing date to take part in an online consultation into Kent County Council's budget for next year is this coming Friday.

It comes as the authority faces having to find £206m worth of savings over the next three years. See www.kent.gov.uk.

Poundland creates jobs

POUNDLAND opens on the Sheppey Retail Park next Saturday - creating 24 new jobs on the island.

The store has blossomed during the austerity period, and is now Europe's biggest single price discount retailer.

Petition picks up pace

ORGANISERS of a petition opposing plans to build more than 1,300 houses on Hermitage Lane, Maidstone, will continue to collect signatures this week.

It is organised by Lib Dem candidate for the 2015 election, Jasper Gerard.



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‘Black Friday’ set to spark fresh retail frenzy...but just what is it?

It started in the States and brought chaos to some UK stores as shoppers came to blows in their efforts to grab the best bargains. So, is this latest import set to be a permanent fixture?



SCRUM: Shoppers have been known to come to blows in their struggle to grab the best retail deals

By Jamie Weir
jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

BLACK Friday last year led to scenes not seen on these shores before as shop shelves were stripped bare and left with nothing but price labels as shoppers strived to bag a bargain - in fact at some stores shoppers even indulged in punch ups in their bids to grab hugely reduced electrical goods.

But what is Black Friday, and where did it come from? The concept is relatively new, not actually making it to the UK until 2010 according to John Lewis, and even now it has not been adopted by all retailers.

This shoppers’ frenzy started life – as many of our consumer culture events do – in the States. It began as a time when traditionally people would begin to flock into retailers across America on the day following the Thanksgiving celebrations.

It was the Philadelphia Police Force that coined the somewhat ominous name ‘Black Friday’. This was chosen because of the chaos that ensued as the public eagerly sought out bargains in the 1950s and 1960s. Despite sounding more like a stockmarket crash, the name stuck.

Last year Black Friday began to really take off across Britain, as Asda – a subsidiary of America’s largest retailer, Walmart – announced it would run promotions in store. Tablet computers were sold for staggering discounts, with prices as low as £49 while a 32-inch LED TV retailed for just £99. These items were sold on a first come, first served basis, which led to some shoppers getting physical in the rush to get bargains.

This year, there may well be another frenzied scrum, as shoppers hit our stores in pursuit of the best sales.

One of the major shopping centres in Kent has already said the day is of such importance to it, that it will be extending its opening hours in order to accommodate the rush.

Robert Goodman, the general manager at Bluewater, told KoS: “Black Friday weekend was a phenomenal success for Bluewater in 2013 and we expect it to be even better this year, which is why we began planning with our retailers 12 months ago.

“We took the decision to extend our hours, and will open from 9am to 11pm on both Friday and Saturday, with selected stores opening from 8am on the Friday.”

A spokesman for Asda also seemed bullish about Black Friday telling KoS that the sale was a huge trading day for the retailer last year.

He said: “The reaction to our Black Friday sale last year was phenomenal. Customers told us they loved the amazing deals on offer, so we’re pleased to confirm that this year, we are again bringing Black Friday to the UK.

“We will see even bigger and better deals, so watch this space for further information on the great bargains on offer in-stores across the UK from November 28.”

But this optimism didn’t extend to everyone, with Thanet’s Westwood Cross shopping centre telling KoS that although it was a big day, it was far from the retail centre’s biggest of the year.

Marketing manager at Westwood Cross, Tanya Morris, claims retail trends for the centre showed shoppers choosing to leave their buying until later in the year.



EXPERT: Mintel’s John Mercer



BRACED: Bluewater is readying itself for the forthcoming retail onslaught

Mrs Morris said: “We found people are leaving their shopping much later in the year, with more of our biggest shopping days coming much closer to Christmas. Last year we saw a huge spike in the week leading up to Christmas, with many shoppers getting into the stores in the final days.

“This year, it could be pretty good for retailers though, as it falls just after the November payday. We are likely to see a boost because that’s going to be the second to last payday for many workers in Kent.”

And despite the retail centre seeing trends towards later shopping in the year, it is working with its retailers to ensure Black Friday will see the tills ringing throughout the day.

Mrs Morris said: “We are going to be promoting the shopping day to help retailers at the centre and have heard from some of them about promotions they will be running. It does look as though it could be a big day.”

But although the day appears to have gained a level of acceptance, retail analyst John Mercer, who works for Mintel – a company specialising in providing research on retail trends – says that there’s no real relevance to the UK consumer.

He said: “Black Friday is likely here to stay but it won’t reach the scale of the January sales or the summer sales – the problem is the date has no relevance to UK shoppers as it does to US shoppers.

“In the UK it’s just another Friday. For retailers, we think its fundamental purpose is to kick-start the Christmas shopping season.”

But, says Mr Mercer, in the future smaller retailers which have so far managed to avoid being drawn into competing for Black Friday sales, will have to take part in the event.

That, he says, is because the big retailers which have driven it forward like John Lewis and Asda, will begin to take greater and greater proportions of Christmas sales.

Last year John Lewis said it had doubled its former record for a single day’s online purchases during Black Friday.

He said: “Looking ahead, we expect more retailers will be forced to compete, including some rivals of those who have driven the event so far.”

So whether you’re a shopping fiend, or someone who prefers to stroll aimlessly around your local town centre, Black Friday is likely to grow in importance in the UK in the future.

VARIATIONS ON A THEME...

Cyber Monday – this day of shopping takes place on the first Monday following Black Friday. The term was first used in a press release in America in 2005. The aim of the day was to encourage shoppers to get online to make their purchases. The term was first used in the UK in 2009, with many retailers citing it as the busiest online shopping day of the year.

Manic Monday – the second Monday of December, which has become increasingly popular with consumers as they leave their Christmas shopping later.

Giving Tuesday – a day when charities ask members of the public to give something back. The Charities Aid Foundation – which is based in Kings Hill – is leading the campaign for Giving Tuesday, stating that it wants to encourage people to give their time, money or voice to a charitable cause on December 2 in what it calls an alternative to the start of the pre-Christmas spending. This campaign is in its first year in the UK, having only been started in 2012 in America. It began life as an antidote to the Christmas shopping season. The Tonbridge-based charity The Bridges Trust has already signed up to Giving Tuesday, with others expected to follow.

Black Friday – many financial meltdowns have taken place across the world, one of which is the original black Friday. It took place when two speculators, Jay Gould and James Fisk, attempted to corner the New York Gold Exchange, in September 1869. The duo attempted to manipulate the gold market in America by getting close to the President of the day, Ulysses Grant. They convinced him not to sell government gold, while they attempted to hoard as much as possible causing the price to soar. However, once the government began selling its holdings of the precious metal, the price plummeted, wiping out the savings of many people who had bought gold as an investment.

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Highlighting the dangers and the high cost of alcohol misuse

Awareness week tells of the impact of drinking on both our health and on our communities...

By Molly Kersey
molly.kersey@archant.co.uk



WITH a hefty annual bill for taxpayers and a detrimental effect on both health and the high street, alcohol misuse can affect people of all ages.

Drinking more than the recommended amount - three or four units a day for men and two or three for women - can lead to harmful physical and psychological effects and destructive behaviours.

This week sees the end of Alcohol Awareness Week, a seven-day campaign spearheaded by Alcohol Concern designed to raise awareness of alcohol issues and the impact it has on our communities.

Kent hospitals treat approximately 20,000 cases of alcohol-related illness and injury a year.

These figures reflect not only admission for alcohol specific conditions such as mental or behavioural problems and alcoholic liver disease, but also the contribution of misuse to increased cardiovascular, gastroenterological and cancer admissions.

Emergency and health services also feel the effect due to accidents on the road, in the workplace and in the home - such as falls.

Kent County Council's interim director of public health Andrew Scott-Clark said: "We know that around 272,000 people in Kent are drinking at dangerous levels which increases the risk of many illnesses and conditions and may well lead to them dying earlier than they should.

"This is not just a concern to the individuals and to their families, it's also a major concern to health providers as this costs the NHS in Kent an estimated £108m a year.

"Although the vast majority of people in Kent enjoy using alcohol sensibly and drink within recommended guidelines, it is paramount that we take action to reduce the number of hospital admissions, because alcohol related harm is largely preventable.

"KCC commissions a number of services and works closely with a number of partner agencies to provide specialist support and treatment, and raise awareness of this issue.

"We are working with partners right across the public, community and voluntary sectors including GPs and pharmacists to spread the message about the recommended drinking levels.

"For those who are identified as needing further help to cut back, we aim to ensure they receive the support they need."

Turning Point runs services on behalf of KCC in Ashford, Canterbury, Dover, Shepway, Swale and Thanet.

The national provider of drugs and alcohol recovery services is encouraging anyone who may worry about their drinking to voice their concerns.

> **"It's important to remember there's no reason to be ashamed of voicing your concerns. There's no one 'type' who develops a drinking problem."**
>
> **Andy Power,** senior operations manager Turning Point East Kent

It hosted a number of drop-in sessions around the county this week, with staff answering questions and offering confidential advice.

Andy Power, senior operations manager for Turning Point in East Kent, said: "Alcohol Awareness Week is a great time to consider whether you, or someone you know, might be drinking too much.

"If you are worried, then a good first step is simply to talk to someone about it.

"That could be a friend, your partner, a family member or your GP- just not someone you regularly drink with.

"It's important to remember that there's absolutely no reason to be ashamed of voicing your concerns.

"There's no one 'type' of person who develops a drinking problem.

"Every day we help people of all ages and from all walks of life towards recovery."

KCA's Young Persons' Service held a session in Sevenoaks, aimed at those aged between 14 and 25, on Wednesday.

The charity provides specialist care to those affected by drugs, alcohol and mental health issues.

It holds interactive and informative sessions to help young people see the risks of excessive drinking.

This includes emergency first aid demonstrations, a 'free pouring' exercise which allows participants to estimate the units decanted before measuring them, and allowing them to try on a pair of goggles that simulate a lack of control in movement.

Information about safety, minimising risk while drinking and the long and short-term effects of alcohol were also discussed.

Cat Archer, from KCA's Young Person's Service, who led the session in Sevenoaks, said: "It's important to raise alcohol awareness from a young age and Alcohol Awareness Week is a great opportunity to further the work that KCA is doing with young people to inform them of alcohol abuse and benefits of responsible consumption.

"We never want to preach to young people, so getting them to see the inaccuracy of free-pouring and the unpleasant side effects of excessive drinking for themselves using beer goggles is key."

Mr Scott-Clark added: "Kent has recently established an Integrated Alcohol Care Pathway (IACP), bringing together agencies and services from across the county to provide information and ensure that people, including families and friends, get the help and support they need quickly.

"We want to further reduce the increasing number of deaths related to alcohol in Kent, and make Kent a safer and more social place to live and work.

"However, we can't do this alone and people need to play their part and be aware of how much they drink, how often and what damage it could be doing to their body."



KCC'S ALCOHOL STRATEGY 2014-16

EARLIER this year, Kent County Council published the Kent Alcohol Strategy 2014-16.
It contains a six point pledge of how they aim to reduce alcohol related harm.
These points are:

1. Improve prevention and identification.
2. Improve the quality of treatment.
3. Co-ordinate enforcement and responsibility.
4. Tailor the plan to the local community.
5. Target vulnerable groups and tackle health inequalities.
6. Protect children and young people.

‘Shop Local’ to save your high street

Our new campaign calls on readers to use their high street before it’s too late and their independent traders close forever BUT it’s not just shops that can be a reason to visit, there’s plenty to do and see...

WITH Christmas fast approaching, there are a variety of activities cropping up across the county to celebrate the festive season and give you a great excuse to visit your town or city centre.

We are all aware of the pressures on our high streets and the fact businesses depend on shoppers and visitors to make the effort to visit them for their livelihoods.

In a bid to help encourage everyone to support their own independent stores and business, we have launched our Shop Local! campaign.

This week, we are turning our attention to the other attractions our towns boast that might tempt you to visit somewhere new or revisit an old haunt.

Our first attraction is Tunbridge Wells’ popular seasonal ice rink, which is returning for its fourth year to the Calverley Grounds.

It is particularly in keeping with the town’s historic splendour and upmarket reputation.

Set in a beautiful setting slap bang between the thriving top end of town and the often neglected lower end – which includes the Pantiles – it acts as a honeypot during the festival season and one which attracts big crowds into the town centre.

Come to the ice rink, the town urges - the rink is operated by the council - and spend the day there browsing the local stores.

It is open seven days a week from this weekend to January 4 – closing only on Christmas Day.

Project director Brian McAteer commented: “It’s a 20m by 30m rink, which is 600 metres squared, set against a really stunning backdrop.

“We cater for everyone - we can accommodate wheelchairs and we will have toddler and parent sessions, and we will be running a number of themed evenings.”

Skating is not the only activity on offer.

Mr McAteer says: “We have lots of Christmas chalets overlooking the rink. These sell festive goods such as wreaths, as well as food and drink - we have The Real Pasta Company, Campervantics, The Salt Beef Co and the Calverley Café.

“We also have a wholefoods company Basil as well as a pop-up bar by Fuggles, who will be selling products like craft beer, and mulled cider.

“If you’re not keen on skating, there is still a lot to do - many people come and watch their children skating, for example, while they have a drink, which could be a hot chocolate or an alcoholic tipple.

“There is enough going on around the rink.”

The festive theme extends into the decor with the council working hard to ensure the attraction does what it needs to pull in the crowds.

He explains: “The park will be lit throughout, and some trees will be individually lit. This year we have decided to extend the lighting, with lots of the trees around the whole area wrapping the rink with lighting - it will be absolutely stunning.”



ICE ATTRACTION: Tunbridge Wells’ very popular seasonal ice rink is returning for the fourth year to the town’s Calverley Grounds

Like other years, it is due to be popular, so Mr McAteer recommends booking in advance – especially for the busy weekends.

He says: “I think that the ice rink is really becoming an important part of the festive season in Tunbridge Wells. Last year we had over 13,000 people visiting it. It is a fantastic experience for all ages.”

Meanwhile, Medway is mining a rich literary seam, with a Dickensian bus tour in Rochester.

Rochester is already a popular destination for tourists and with its strong links with Charles Dickens – he lived and died nearby – it has a steady stream of guests.

And with its picturesque high street, the council will be hoping to lure in shoppers to keep the cash tills ringing this year.

The tour runs on weekends and runs until December 21.

It leaves from the Guildhall Museum in Rochester at 10am and 1.30pm (except for Dickensian Christmas weekend December 6 and 7 where there will be only one tour leaving at 1pm).

Tickets cost £10 for adults and £7.50 for children and concessions.

Mary Sewell, senior tourism officer for Medway Council, said: “The tour involves two actors - one playing a fictional character called Elijah Puddlephat, who as a lesser known author is Dickens’s nemesis, and another playing Dickens himself, and also re-enacting some of his characters. There is a friendly rivalry between the two writers, which is great fun.

“The special customised bus will visit a variety of places, taking about two and a half hours in total, and includes lots of interaction between the characters and the audience, including Dickens-related questions.”

The bus visits places of interest around Cobham, Higham and Cooling that were well-known to Charles Dickens. These include Restoration House, Six Poor Travellers House, Eastgate House and Gardens.

The tour will also visit St James’ Church in Cooling, which was the inspiration for the opening chapter of Great Expectations, then it goes on to Gad’s Hill Place in Higham, the house Dickens bought in 1856 and lived there until his death in 1870.

Ms Sewell says: “This tour is great fun, it’s suitable for the whole family, and very reasonably priced.

“One thing I would advise is to get there in plenty of time – you don’t want to miss the bus.”

One welcome returning attraction this year will be festive lights to the streets of Canterbury.

Last year, as a consequence of the city council having to seek savings due to the cuts in its central government funding, the historic city centre was left bare.

Not so in 2014.

Traders clubbed together via the Business Improvement District organisation and secured illuminations for the next few years.

The lights were switched on and will be welcoming shoppers and tourists in the run-up to Christmas.



SHOP LOCAL: Our campaign looks at the attractions to lure us back

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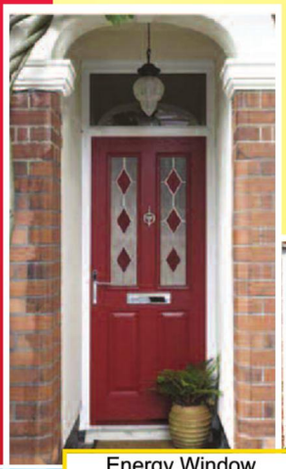
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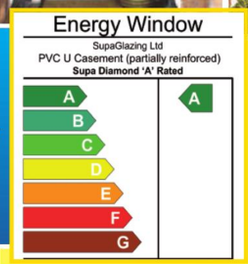
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Farage switches focus to 2015 after Reckless victory

The polls were right as Ukip won at this week's by-election in Rochester & Strood - and now they are eyeing up yet more seats. **Sarah Linney** looks at a remarkable night of political drama in the early hours of Friday. Photos: **Isabel Infantes**

UKIP's remarkable rise to prominence shows little sign of slowing after its first ever Kent MP declared "if we can win here, we can win anywhere".

The Ukip bandwagon was never really in doubt of capturing the Rochester & Strood seat, triggered after Mark Reckless defected from the Tories to join Nigel Farage's party.

Mr Reckless was returned with a 2,920 vote majority at 4am on Friday, over nearest rival Kelly Tolhurst, representing the Conservatives.

That gave Ukip a 42.1 per cent share of the overall vote, compared to the Conservatives' 34.81 per cent.

Speaking after his win, the re-elected Mr Reckless couldn't resist a swipe at his rivals. He said: "Thank you to the people of Rochester and Strood. You are my boss. I stepped down to ask your permission to join Ukip; you hired me again. You remain my boss; don't let me forget it.

"How did we win here? By getting support from every section of the community. Thank you to the Tories and Lib Dems who came with me to my new party.

"It's not Ed Miliband, but Ukip that represents the concerns of most working men and women.

"Rochester and Strood was our 271st most winnable seat. If we win here, we can win across the country. If you vote Ukip, you get Ukip.

"We want to lift our eyes to horizons beyond Europe.

"If Ukip is to win nationwide – and we have proved that we can – it must be a party that speaks to and for the whole nation and everyone that lives in it.

"Think about what it would mean to have a block of Ukip MPs. If you believe in freedom, if you believe in low taxes, if you believe in clean government, if you believe in localism, if you believe in people power, if you believe that the world is bigger than Europe, then come with us and we will give you back your country."

Ukip leader Nigel Farage, whose charisma is seen as absolutely essential to his party's success, was once again stood by the side of his latest MP.

Just as he had been alongside Douglas Carswell - a close friend of Mark Reckless - when he won the Clacton by-election just a few weeks ago.

Mr Farage told KoS: "This by-election was Ukip against the government. The resources that were thrown at this by the Conservatives were absolutely massive.

"If we can win our 271st target seat in a battle royal against a very big party with national resources, I don't think anyone intelligent would predict anything for the general election.

"This throws the whole thing up in the air.

He added: "I'm just here, in my normal quiet, modest way, to support Mark, who has been very brave."

Tory candidate Kelly Tolhurst, clearly disappointed by the defeat, left the count just minutes after the result

She paused long enough just to say: "I am going to fight every day until May to return a Tory MP in this constituency.

"I will not let Ukip put Ed Miliband in Number 10."

While a major blow to the Tory party and leader David Cameron - who made five visits to the constituency in the run up to the election - the damage was significant too for both Labour and the Liberal Democrats.

Labour's candidate Naushabah Khan won plenty of praise for the way she handled her campaign, with many tipping her for bigger and better things, but that failed to equate into a decent share of the vote.

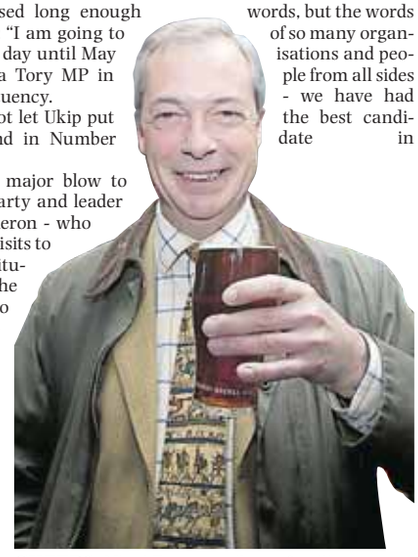
She polled 6,713 votes - around 16.76 per cent of the vote. At the start of the campaign, and having comes second in 2010, Labour initially harboured hopes a split right-wing vote could see it make ground.

Its miserable night was compounded when it emerged shadown attorney general Emily Thornberry, on a visit to Rochester this week, posted a photograph of a house in the area with England flags fluttering and a white van outside, attracting accusations of being a snob.

So just what went wrong?

Medway Labour leader Vince Maple explained: "We know there are Labour supporters who have voted Labour all their lives, who have voted Ukip this week to give Cameron a kicking. We have also had Labour voters who voted Conservative to try and keep Ukip out.

"But – and these are not our words, but the words of so many organisations and people from all sides - we have had the best candidate in



CHEERS: Nigel Farage strikes a familiar pose prior to the polls closing on Thursday.



DELIGHT: Ukip leader and party supporters celebrate news of Mark Reckless' victory on Friday morning

Naushabah Khan. In a number of hustings she has had feedback from national media outlets to say she is a star and 100 miles ahead of the rest of them.

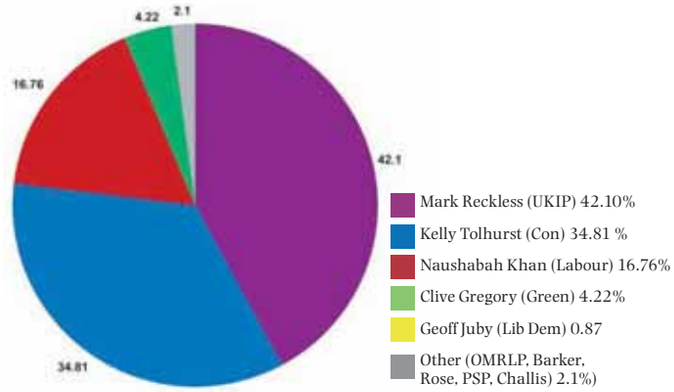
"If it was on the candidate alone she would be head and shoulders above the rest, but by-elections are decided on a number of issues; the candidates, the momentum - Ukip had momentum as they were the party Reckless defected to - and the state of the nation. There is something of an anti-politics view, and people view Ukip as somehow different from the other political parties.

"The big loser of the night has to be David Cameron. This is the second MP who has left his party and gone to Ukip. If anyone is asking themselves questions in the next two weeks it should be him."

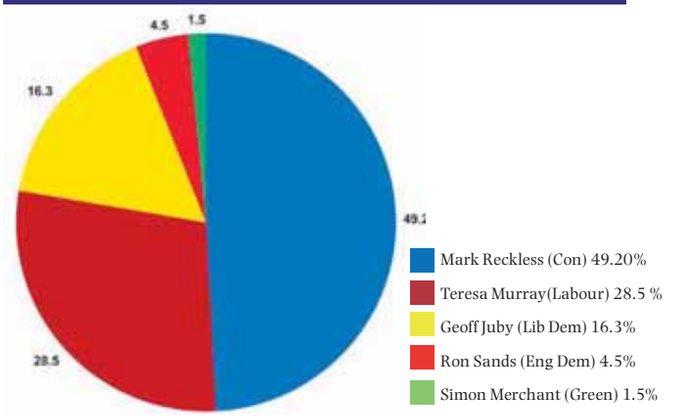
Deputy prime minister Nick Clegg, no stranger to being given a bloody nose in the polls, was left battered and bruised when his Liberal Democrat candidate Geoff Juby - who failed to impress during the campaign - polled a miserly 349 votes, less than one per cent of all votes cast. He lost his deposit.

It once again will send a message that should Ukip continue a remarakble rise in popularity, they may yet prove to carry the balance of power at next May's general elec

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ELECTION DAY: From left - Mark Reckless joy after win, casting his vote (with his support extending to the animal world), and Conservative hopeful Kelly Tolhurst arrives at the count full of smiles before hearing her fate

tion, forcing the Lib Dems out of that position.

The Greens came fourth with 1,692 votes. Its candidate Clive Gregory has also won plaudits for his campaign and the party is thought to have won over disaffected Labour voters.

He explained: "In the past year, the Greens' membership has increased by 82 per cent. And over the last month or so I would be very surprised if it hadn't shot up even more, certainly for our local party.

"And if I have had a part to play in getting the Green surge to continue, and getting the message across, then it wouldn't matter if we didn't get any votes. If we have achieved that then we have done something really big here.

"But the more votes we get, the more legitimacy that gives us.

"People are interested in what we have to say. They say there's someone talking sense about the financial situation. Ukip is about smearing immigrants, but immigration is not a big deal - it's a distraction from the banks and their financial mismanagement. There's a lot of worrying stuff going on."

The results were confirmed just after 4am on Friday after just over 50 per cent of the electorate turned out to vote.

But while a remarkable achievement to over turn what had been a nearly 10,000 majority at the 2010 election, the result will leave the seat delicately poised for the 2015 elections next May.

One of those convinced the Tories will win it back was Thanet North's Sir Roger Gale.

He insisted that this time next year Kelly Tolhurst would be returned to the seat once held by Mr Reckless in Tory colours.

It will certainly make for a fascinating re-run. While by-elections are traditionally seen as the opportunity to make protest votes against the Government, the momentum behind Ukip is taking everyone by surprise.

In the space of the last month they have returned two elected MPs after sitting Tory MPs defected.

The question now is whether they can put up candidates less well known and established as credible, viable candidates elsewhere in the county.

With leader Nigel Farage standing for South Thanet, it seems highly likely he too will be catching a regular service to Westminster from his home in Westerham.

And those in Dover, Shepway and Swale - areas which saw a swing to Ukip at last year's county elections - will no doubt be casting a nervous glance behind them at the prospect of Ukip springing a major surprise once again.





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Kate Hamilton-Harris, Managing Director of Lighthouse Fostering, is passionate that everyone is seen as an individual

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As part of their transformational approach, children and foster carers are put at the heart of everything they do.

Managing Director Kate Hamilton-Harris is passionate everyone is seen as an individual and that children's behaviour can be viewed differently as a meaningful communications which reflect the inner conflict the child might be feeling.

Kate said: "We believe all children will have experiences which will affect their behaviour and self-image but by seeing carers as 'experts on everyday" life we believe this approach we will prevent children from experiencing rejection and further trauma which maybe compounded by multiple moves".

"Lighthouse Fostering does not have 'types' of people or the perfect image of a foster carer but sees everyone as unique as our children who equally come from all walks of life".

"By encouraging change can be promoted by mutual respect, strength of relationships and finding solutions together.

Carers from all backgrounds regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion are invited to take the first step on a journey full of rewards.

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To find out more about why Lighthouse Fostering is unique and the different types of care please call Kate or the team at the Head office on 03333 44 1914 or text LIGHTHOUSE to 88802.

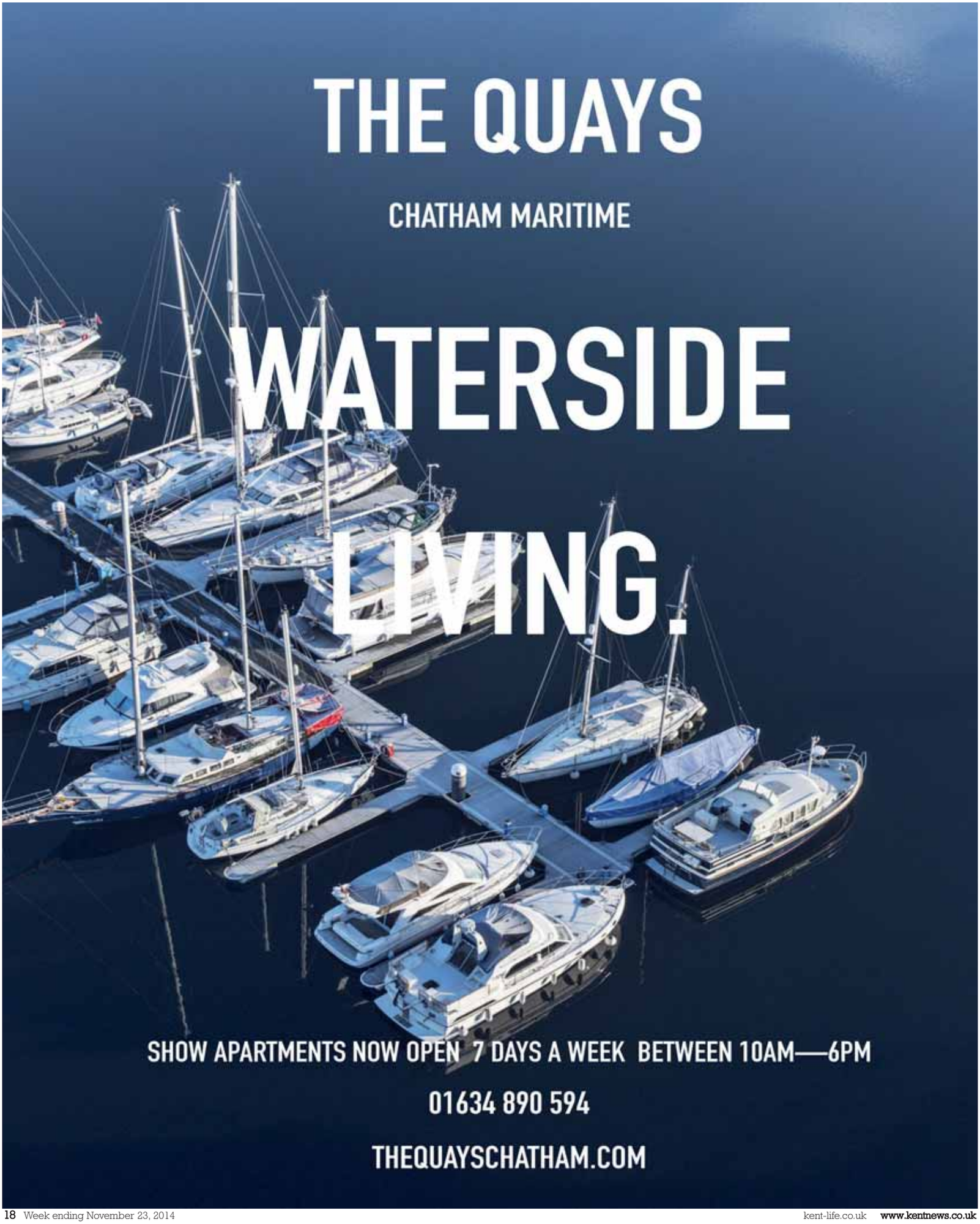
The website www.lighthousefostering.co.uk has lots of information including "Myth busting facts".

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All aboard for job on the railway

As it looks to secure lottery funding this week, **Sarah Linney**, meets the team at the East Kent Railway and the opportunities it has provided for a young generation...

TO MOST people, it's a fun day out – a leisurely trip on a light railway through the gorgeous east Kent countryside.

But behind the families and tourists and the cakes and teas in the café, the East Kent Railway has another story to tell – the tale of a training scheme that is transforming the lives of young people in the area.

For the past year, the tiny station at Shepherdswell, between Canterbury and Dover, has been home to an apprenticeship scheme training teenagers in railway maintenance.

It is estimated to have contributed almost £2 million to the east Kent economy, but it is also doing something truly invaluable – creating opportunities.

"A big issue for those communities is youth unemployment, particularly around Dover and Deal," explains the railway's apprenticeship supervisor Jason Rose.

"The work is just not there or people are reluctant to take on young people."

Shepherdswell is in the heart of the former Kent coalfields, and the area suffered greatly from the closure of the pits in the 1980s.

With several villages, including Aylesham and Elvington, built purely to house miners and their families, the communities were left not only without their main source of employment, but also isolated.

"It's been very hard for the villages. Aylesham, Elvington, Eythorne and Tilmanstone are all deprived areas," explains apprenticeship liaison and funding officer Gary Cox.

"They have concentrated on not losing their heritage, but they weren't looking to the future. People thought that we hadn't got a colliery, so we hadn't got a future."

And with work hard to come by, there was little for school leavers to do to fill the days.

"We get lads who have tended to be unemployed and bored. Many of them have probably never had a full-time job," Mr Rose says.

"They don't know what to do and have been taking recreational drugs, particularly cannabis."

The idea for the scheme came to Mr Rose when he was working for the now-defunct charity Skills Factory, which worked to improve training and employment opportunities for people in Dover, Deal and Sandwich.

The charity was part of the Aylesham Neighbourhood Project (now Bechange), which received money from the Coalfields Regeneration Trust – a funding body set up to provide training for people in former mining communities when the pits closed.

"I could see that there was a potential to upskill people for the rail industry," he said.

"Infrastructure is the one growth industry in this country, and there's a short supply of skilled trackmen."

Opposite Mr Rose's office was recruitment agency McGinley Support Services and he decided to take what he terms a "cheeky punt".

"I knew some people there and I went in and said to them 'if we trained people, could you offer them employment?'" he recalled.

"I thought it was too good an opportunity to miss. As valid as computer courses and CV courses are, you really need something that is an industry.

"The basic training to work in the rail industry is quite expensive and we took a bit of a risk really, persuading the funders to use public money to train these people, but it worked."

Twenty-four young men took part in the pilot scheme in April 2013 – one of whom happened to be Gary Cox's son – and all of them found work through McGinley Support Services.

Since then, more than 100 young men have completed the scheme, and almost all are now working in the rail industry.

Although it was designed with the sons and grandsons of miners in mind, it is open to anyone – male or female, although no girls have signed up yet – the only stipulation being that you need to be aged 18.

With the Skills Factory no longer in existence, funding is now provided by training company Arc Academy, which runs similar schemes at six other heritage railways in the UK.

Mr Cox says it has given the young men a new lease of life.

"All you keep hearing is that these kids don't want work and are happy just to sit around on street corners," he said.

"But you have to look at why. Just going to the Jobcentre to sign on is enough to demoralise anyone.

"Within a week we proved that it's all rubbish. They want work. You want to see them out there getting stuck in all day long.

"Some of them were going down the wrong roads, but it's taken them off street corners. They fit into the community now, and they have money which is going into the community."

"It gives them the routine which was lacking in their lives," Jason Rose adds. "They've got to get up in the morning and come here.

"It gives them a sense of achievement. When they leave you can feel their pride in completing training and having a recognised qualification.

"And you can see the benefits here of having the lads doing the work. They are working out in all weathers, doing the unglamorous stuff like changing sleepers and cutting down vegetation."

The teenagers have to be committed to the scheme and they are left in no doubt about what is expected of them – including renouncing drugs completely.

Turn to Page 20



LEARNING A NEW SKILL: Apprentices at work laying new track are learning these skills thanks to the work of the East Kent Railway. (All pics ADY KERRY)

AN APPRENTICE'S VIEW

APPRENTICE Luke Tiernan enjoyed his training at the East Kent Railway so much that he made a three-hour round trip each day to get to work.

While taking part in the scheme, he caught the train to Shepherdswell each morning from Herne Bay, where he lives with his parents Rachel and Matt, but said that the journey was worth it.

''I spent two years at college on different courses and didn't enjoy them,'' said Mr Tiernan, who went to Chatham House Grammar School in Ramsgate.

''My stepdad told me that the rail industry is secure and has a lot of opportunities. He enjoys his work and the wages sounded good, so I thought why not? I was quite excited about getting involved in it.

''It's good work, and the days go quickly because it's always busy. It can be physically tiring, it depends what you're doing.''

And his advice to anyone thinking about applying for the scheme is to go for it.

''It's definitely worth doing. I enjoyed it, I looked forward to work, and it's given me the chance to earn good money,'' he explained, having previously worked as a roofer and in McDonald's.

''I learned a lot and I definitely felt happier, because I was getting on with something that I wanted to do. It does give people a chance.

''The tutors are all friendly and helpful and generally nice people, and the apprentices all got along. We were all from different backgrounds and were different sorts of people, but we all talked and had a laugh.''



ON THE RIGHT TRACK: Maintenance work around a rail crossing is just one of the areas the training covers



SKILLS: Apprentices at work tightening chair screws / packing and level-

"They do a full medical and drugs and alcohol test before their training," Mr Rose says.

"We are not judgmental, but the industry is zero tolerance.

"We have fun here, but we are very strict. It's the nature of the industry: you need to listen to instructions."

"On the first day they all turned up in baseball caps and shorts," Mr Cox recalls.

"The dog from the café came bounding into the classroom, so we said it was a sniffer dog. The look on their faces was so funny. You could see it dawning on them: this isn't a playground, it's the real thing.

"Within a week they were all knuckling down. We are giving them that chance, and they are very respectful. They say that this has given them a chance to get off drugs."

The year-long apprenticeship gives the students an NVQ level 2 in rail maintenance and engineering and prepares them for the role of skilled trackman.

They receive three months' intensive training at Shepherdswell, for which they are paid. As well as gaining practical experience, working on the site and learning how to use small tools, they will study in the classroom, covering basic maths and science as well as safety, first aid and fire awareness.

They then start full-time work on the mainline railways, but are looked after by their Shepherdswell supervisors for the rest of the 12 months. As well as returning regularly to the classroom for more training and tests, they'll be visited at their workplace by staff to make sure everything is going okay.

Each intake has up to 12 places, but filling them is never a problem – the scheme has been so successful that the railway barely needs to promote it.

"We have a big advantage over a classroom or a university because they get the railway environment here," Jason Rose explained.

"When we first started we worked with youth agencies, but a lot of it has been word of mouth.

"The scheme allows the lads to earn very good money as 18-year-olds. They usually earn between £8 and £15 an hour and a lot of them are working in the London area. The career progression is quite something if you have your head on your shoulders."

"We have to turn people away. We can't keep up with the demand," added Gary Cox, 61.

"We encourage mining families to do it and I get lots of inquiries from old colliery mates. Only about three or four per cent of the lads don't go on to work in the industry.

"Now we need to expand the age range: I want to see 16-year-olds here on work experience, and girls as well. We would also like to run other rail apprenticeship schemes, in particular NVQ level 3."

The railway aims to become a centre of excellence for training and it is

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TRACK: Securing track to chair with a rail clip

clear that Gary and Jason have big plans.

But what really matters to them is the difference their work is making to the lives of a small community.

"They are close to my heart, these youths," Mr Cox said.

"This has helped them to live a meaningful life within their communities that they have never had before. They say that giving them a job has given them the rest of their lives.

"They are looking forward to their futures, whereas before they only looked to tomorrow night.

"It's about the lads, but it's about the community more. Things are changing in our communities.

"This will never take the place of a colliery, especially in my heart, but the community spirit is still very much there."

To find out more about the scheme or to apply, contact Gary Cox on 07800 545135 or garyekr@sky.com, or Jason Rose on 07766 077630 or jason@arcacademyuk.com.

You can also apply through the National Apprenticeship Service website at www.apprenticeships.org.uk, Jobcentre Plus or agencies such as CXK or the Shaw Trust.

BIDDING FOR £50,000 LOTTERY FUNDING

THE East Kent Railway will go head to head with another Kent attraction tomorrow (Monday) in a bid to scoop £50,000 of lottery funding.

A public vote will decide whether the railway, which wants to upgrade its facilities and reintroduce steam trains, or Herne Bay Pier, which wants to put canopies up to protect visitors and entertainers in the rain, wins the cash.

The railway wants to upgrade both stations – Shepherdswell and Eythorne – to provide better facilities for visitors.

"We also want to support our apprentices and give them work. It's about helping our community," Gary Cox added.

The pier trust wants to put a canopy up over the eating area – set to open in March – and the stage, to avoid performers having to cancel because of rain.

"This will mean we can use it for ten months of the year as opposed to eight weeks," trustee Andrew Cook explained.

"Acts won't come to us if they have to cancel because it's raining.

"The pier is one of Herne Bay's essential landmarks and a very big focal point in the town. And we are completely self-funding - every penny comes from donations or letting out the huts on the pier.

"We are desperate for the money. It is the biggest shot in the arm that the trust will get. If we have to fund this ourselves it will probably take us four or five years."

Voting is open from 9am to midnight and the phone number will be published on www.peoplesmillions.org.uk on the day. You can vote up to ten times.

Both attractions will be featured on Meridian news at 6pm.

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Fracking meeting sees both sides applying the pressure

It is an issue that is seemingly pitting the average man and woman in the street against the companies with a vested interest in it. Drilling for shale gas and the extraction process used – fracking – is polarising public opinion and the debate came to a head this week as both sides of the argument clashed at a turbulent meeting, prompting one panel member to walk out. **Jamie Weir** saw it all unfold



DEBATE: The panel at the fracking debate in Cantbury

"WE'VE come here to be panellists, and we've only got two questions. I'm not putting up with this," said Green Party councillor and parliamentary candidate, Ian Driver, as he stormed off the stage at this week's debate on the extraction of shale gas by fracking.

The debate, which was at times turbulent and filled with rhetoric, pitted fracking industry executives against campaigners who wish to see the process banned.

It was held at Augustine House as part of Canterbury Christ Church University's Engaging Sociology series.

Hydraulic fracturing – or fracking as it is commonly known – is the process of extracting gas by drilling horizontally, sometimes for miles and at depths which may be up to several kilometres below the ground, and then pumping water mixed with up to 600 chemicals – known as 'slick water' – into the rock at high pressure.

This fractures the rock, allowing gas to flow from the wells once the slick water is pumped out. It has grown in controversy over the past three years, with campaigners claiming it could lead to serious environmental problems in the future. They cite concerns such as contamination of water supplies and earthquakes, like those in Lancashire in 2011, to be serious risks associated with the process.

Wednesday's debate aimed to settle the issue once and for all, with Gerwyn Williams, chief executive from the only company – Coastal Oil and Gas – to hold licences to explore for shale gas in east Kent attending to speak on behalf of the process.

He started proceedings, telling the packed room that the process was not only safe, but that it had happened for decades without issue.

He said: "It has been going on onshore for the last 60 years with 2,000 plus wells drilled onshore, and about 10 per cent of those fracked. So we have had 200 wells fracked, without any problems. For about 55 years, we didn't hear anything about fracking."

Julie Wassmer, from East Kent Against Fracking, claimed Mr Williams was instead referring to traditional fracking, rather than the 'high volume hydraulic fracking' which was first practiced in 1998.

Originally fracking began in Kansas during the 1940s, using 200 pounds per spare inch (psi) pressure, and about 1,000 gallons of water to extract gas. The high volume, high pressure type of fracking which the industry would now like to use in the UK, uses pressures of up to 20,000 psi pressure and six million gallons of water.

She said "We oppose fracking precisely because of the facts, which are so often shamelessly skewed and distorted by the industry and the government to support the government's overriding commitment to shale.

"What is put forward as a fact that 200 wells have been fracked safely is a disingenuous statement. Those 200 fracks were non-shale fracks which took place in conventional wells.

"They are not at all comparable, and that is a fact. I have the letter from the Department of Energy and Climate Change to show that."

Potential community benefits which could come from fracking were also put forward as one of the positive aspects of fracking.

Mr Williams stated that a fracking site would benefit the local parish council to the tune of £100,000 and then one, or two per cent of the well's total revenues. This, he said, could help communities to pay for services they need.

This was met with jeers and laughter from many in the audience.

Professor Paul Stevens is a Distinguished Fellow at Chatham House – an international think tank based in London. He argued the money may never go to those directly affected by the fracking, and that it was far too little for the potential environmental damage.

He said: "I actually think it is a de-









SCRUTINY: Oil and gas exploration rig

risory sum of money. One of the ways that people who are pro fracking try to get around it is by using the term, the local community. But what constitutes the local community? Is that the parish council, or the county authority?"

And in a county which is classified as water stressed, the subject of that all important resource was always likely to take centre stage.

Dr Nick Riley MBE, who spoke in favour of fracking, told the audience water use was nothing to worry about

He said: "The water use is a lot smaller than in many other industries. It's certainly a lot smaller than the water use in a coal-fired power plant. There are restrictions which would apply during periods of drought as well.

"If you pull up the stats for water contamination you'll find that actually it is the water industry which is the biggest water contaminator. You won't find the oil and gas industry on the list."

Despite this, Michael Hill, an expert adviser on shale gas to the EU Commission, said one of the biggest problems was not the 600 million gallons of water pumped down the well but the water which flowed back once the fracking was finished.

He said: "I won't call it fracking water, because if you were to drink it, you'd die. The water which comes back can have 1,438 times the maximum safe level of drinking water with arsenic at 20 times and 90 times the maximum safe drinking water level of radioactive sludge in it. That's what the CEO of Cuadrilla fracking company calls non-hazardous. I'd like to see him drink it."

It is that toxicity, Mr Hill says, that causes him the most concern. In a peer reviewed article for the Lancet magazine – the UK's leading medical journal – he says he showed conclusively the dangers of allowing fracking in a badly regulated environment.

He said: "I concluded there is a 30 per cent increase in birth defects if you live within 10 miles of a fracking well – soon, that's going to be all of us. There was also a 38 per cent increase in cancers.

"There are no shale gas specific regulations at all. The regulators do not have the time, money or people with the right experience to regulate this industry. That is why the only well to have been fracked in this country suffered a double failure.

"Whether you're for, or against fracking, you have to decide how many additional birth defects fracking is worth to get a few more per cent of gas out of the ground. If you say none, you've just banned fracking."



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Village history is brought to book

The village of Otterham was best known for its brickmaking and for giving Sir Francis Drake his first taste of the sea. But with its remarkable history being lost, a new book aims to ensure it survives.

By Maria Chiorando
maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

THERE can be few people who have seen an area transformed during their life time and not regretted having charted its development and changing face.

And with the seemingly relentless need to build more and more houses, there are increasing fears our local history continues to be lost.

All of which was a driver in the production of a new book about a village in Swale.

Otterham, near Upchurch, is best known for its brickmaking heritage and a link to explorer Sir Francis Drake.

Otterham Creek, legend has it, was the small port which gave a young Sir Francis his first experience of the sea.

But when the final brick field was recently given permission to be developed, photographer Mike Gunnill decided the history would not be lost or forgotten for future generations.

So for the last eight months he has been compiling 'Otterham, Kent –Your Heritage' – a book which examines the area's history before more of it is swallowed by new housing.

Mr Gunnill told KoS: "The whole idea of the book is to record the heritage around Otterham Quay which borders Rainham and Upchurch.

"In basic terms, the whole area was surrounded by brick fields. The last remaining brickfield is Four Gun Field.

"Before that, the last field to be built on was Big Field. There is now no mention of it anywhere – it is as if it never existed.

"I thought it would be a shame if the same thing happened to Four Gun Field. I was talking about it to some friends in the pub. I said I thought it would be a good idea to put together a book of the history."

So for the last eight months he's been researching and compiling information for the book which hits the shelves next month.

"I knocked on a lot of doors and generally made a bit of a nuisance of myself," says Mr Gunnill.

"That was how I found a lot of information. I met one lady who was in her 90s, who put me in touch with someone else, who then put me in touch with someone else, and it snowballed in that way.

"I met some very nice people along the way, and found that people are very welcoming once they know you're looking into the history and heritage of the area.

"They didn't know me, but the more time I spent talking to them, the more they opened up."

While researching the book, Mr Gunnill uncovered some unexpected stories.

"One thing I learnt that really surprised me was about seaplane testing that went on just before 1914.

"A man called Reginald Wells from Wrotham and local businessman Seymour Wakeley modified an aircraft and began seaplane testing on Otterham Creek. Early tests were not successful and the start of the First World War stopped further work.

"Wells moved to Chelsea and started one of the first aircraft factories under licence from the Government.

"He later also started a seaplane school based on the tests done earlier in Upchurch."

Another interesting character was a man called Frederick Cadogan Barron, who managed the Cement Works at Overshore, just along Otterham Creek on the east bank.

"He retired from work in Spain and needed an 'interest' in his retirement, so he started a cement factory.

"He worked alongside Sampson William Charlesworth in Bilbao in Spain. So, when he needed a manager, he persuaded him and his family to move to Otterham Villa in Station Road, Rainham.

"He managed the factory through several name changes and owners until his death in St Bartholomew's Hospital, Rochester, in 1894.

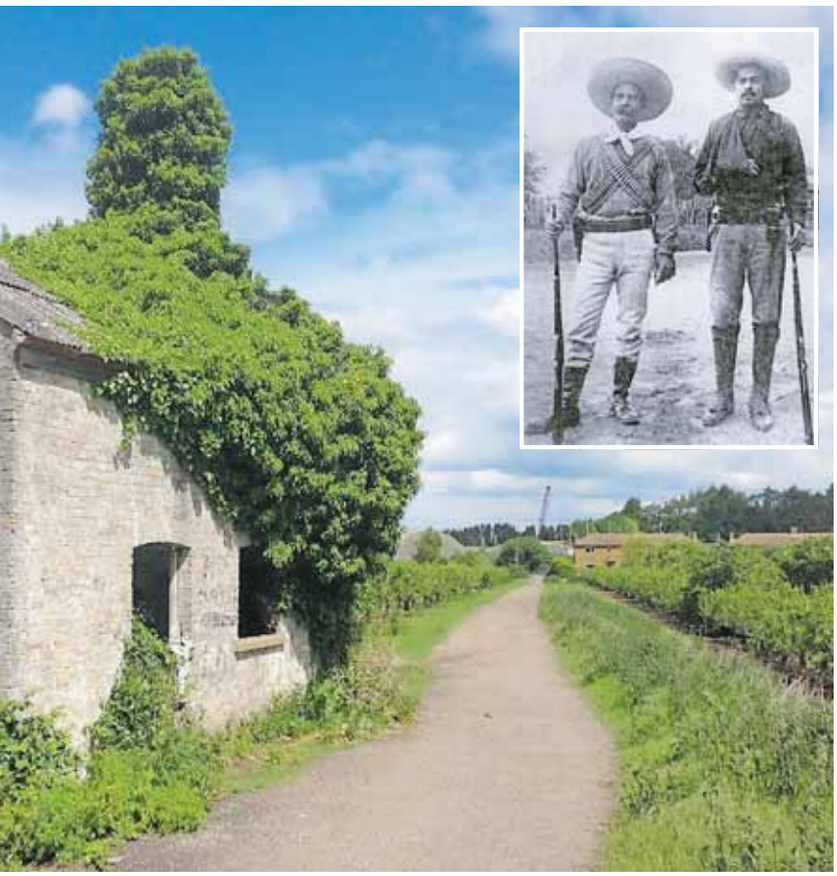


REMAINS: Brick field offices in Rainham (above) and Frederick Charlesworth in Mexico (inset)





PAST: Boats on the creek (left) and a family wedding in Otterham



"At his death bed was eldest son Frederick Charlesworth who left Rainham and went to Mexico to fight in the revolution alongside rebel leader Emillano Zapata-Salazar – the two are pictured together in the book.

"Frederick died in Bakersfield, California, USA, in 1946."

It's not Mr Gunnill's first foray into the world of historical archiving.

"I did a picture book about four years ago – that was done for charity and that got me into it.

"During that process, I started thinking about what happens to old photos. Often, when someone dies, their house will be cleared, and all their photos will get thrown away.

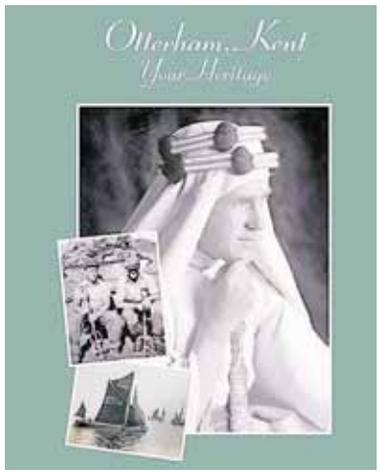
"I thought that was a shame, so I started a website, where we would put the pictures – people can go online if they are researching their family tree and so on.

"I get messages from people all over the world, I got one from Canada recently, and it'll be people saying things like, 'I'd never seen a photo of my grandfather before'."

He says: "I hope people will enjoy learning about the local area."

The book, priced £6.50, is released on December 6.

Copies can be found at the Sunburst Bookshop, Station Road, Rainham, ME8 7RS or further details, visit www.upchurch-village.co.uk.



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By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk



Ten years after the hunting ban, is it working?

It is often described as a quintessentially English rural scene, as huntsmen on horseback set off in pursuit of a fox. But after been banned for a decade, the debate over the rights and wrongs continue

ON THE RUN: Hunts continue across the county in a different guise, but the arguments refuse to die down

A DECADE since the fox hunting ban was introduced, the Countryside Alliance insists the law is "a mess" and remains based on "prejudice and politcal point scoring".

And their view is backed by at least one MP who says the ban is "illogical" and claims that fox hunting continues, albeit in a different guise. Another says he would vote to reppeal it if given an option.

The controversial practice of huntsmen and packs of dogs chasing foxes across the countryside was outlawed in 2004 (see box) but there remains certain loopholes which allows drag hunting - where hunts follow an artificially laid scent - or for dogs to flush out animals.

At the time, the ban was celebrated and mourned in equal measure, with the Countryside Alliance, which supports hunting, claiming jobs would be lost and local economies harmed.

Supporters of the ban, however, say jobs have increased. The two sides remain at loggerheads.

The Countryside Alliance say a decade on and practically every hunt that was operating when the Act was passed is still going strong and they are all still determined to overthrow the law.

It director of campaigns, Tim Bonner, explained: "The determination of hunts, and the continued support of the wider rural community, has ensured that hunting is still thriving 10 years after the Hunting Act was passed, but the law has proved just as unworkable, pointless and wasteful as we predicted.

"A law which was passed because of MPs' obsession with fox hunting has been used almost exclusively to prosecute poachers. A law which was supposed to be about animal welfare has not reduced suffering or stopped foxes being killed.

"A law which was supposed to be 'straightforward and enforceable' has continued to create confusion in the courts and waste hundreds of hours of police time.

"This is a remarkable law in that it seems that absolutely no-one concerned is happy with it. The Prime Minister when it was passed admits it was one of his biggest mistakes; the courts have called it 'confusing', and 'far from simple to interpret or apply'; the police dread having to investigate politically motivated allegations; hunts have to operate under ridiculous restrictions which mean they are at risk of prosecution every time they open the kennel gates; and now even the anti-hunting organisations who wrote the legislation are calling for wholesale changes.

"There is only one sensible solution to this mess and that is to get rid of the Hunting Act. This issue will never be resolved until we have legislation based on evidence and principle, rather than prejudice and political point scoring."

Thanet North MP Roger Gale was one of those that campaigned vigorously to have the so-called sport banned.

The Conservative MP said: "I am pleased that at the moment there is no prospect of it being repealed.

"I have said to the League Against Cruel Sports, of which I am an honorary life member, that I am not minded to seeing the thing coming back to Parliament at all.

"On balance, although it's an imperfect piece of legislation, I think it is probably better to leave it alone and let it get on with its work.

"There are loopholes in it on both sides, and there are people on the opposite side of the campaign who will say what I am saying, that is it not an entirely perfect piece of legislation. The House of Commons spend dozens of hours debating it and I don't think there is any real appetite to revisit it.

"For me, I am glad this practice has been consigned to the same dustbin of history as cock fighting, bear baiting and dog fighting and long may it remain that way.

"Farmers have been able to control the number of foxes by lamping and shooting since time immemorial."

Mr Gale also pointed out that far from costing jobs at hunts, there seems to have been a boom.

He told us: "There is a significant number of people riding the hounds now who didn't do so before because they are engaged in drag hunting and now fox hunting because they didn't like the practice of killing foxes.

"They do enjoy riding over rough terrain following a scene, and I have no problem with that.

"The beauty of that is you can lay the course to match the skills of the riders. So you have hairy huntsmen who can take six foot walls and children who can take modest hedges. You can also start at the pub you want to, and end at the pub you want to. Foxes are far less predictable.

"I am all in favour of country sports, particularly riding. If they are doing what they are doing within the law, and are doing it responsibly and properly, then no one can quarrel with that."

But his colleague on the Tory backbenches, Swale MP Gordon Henderson, said he is in favour of bring fox hunting back, and claims it does go on in the county - but didn't know where and by whom.

He told us: "It is my understanding that fox hunting with dogs does still take place in Kent, regularly and legally.

"I do support a repeal of the current law, which simply isn't working and is illogical, not least because it still allows hunting with dogs provided only two hounds are involved.

"I would like to see the existing law replaced by one that is actually based on animal welfare and not the prejudice against legitimate country pursuits that I believe, sadly, was at the heart of the 2004 Act.

"Whether the current law is enforceable is a question best answered by the police."

At the Old Surrey Burstow and West Kent hunt, they just do trail hunting now after trialling hunting actual foxes with just two hounds which are flushed towards a gun. This method remains legal.

Huntmaster Jeff Pegrum said: "We did try this a few years ago, but it just wasn't viable. You need a pack of hounds."

He also agreed it was somewhat dangerous chasing a fox towards someone who is armed and intending to shoot the animal.

He told us: "We do trail hunting twice a week and numbers-wise we are still reasonably the same as before.

"We are hoping the law will be altered so we can get back to where we used to be which will all depend on what government is in power.

"When we did fox hunting, it was always the injured, maimed and poorly foxes that were got rid of. That left those that were in good condition."

Another member in favour of fox hunting is Ashford MP Damian Green. The Conservative politician said: "I voted against the law when it was first introduced, and I would vote

Controversial introduction of Hunting Act 2014

ON November 16, 2004, after years of heated debates, protest marches and campaigns, MPs in the House of Commons voted overwhelmingly in favour to ban foxhunting.

In a Parliament dominated by Labour, 387 voted in favour of the ban and 174 against.

It came into force on February 18, 2005, two years after foxhunting had been banned in Scotland.

The key complaint levelled against the Hunting Act 2004 is its ambiguity.

While it bans the hunting of wild mammals (notably foxes, deer, hares and mink) with dogs in England and Wales; the Act does not cover the use of dogs in the process of flushing out an unidentified wild mammal, nor does it affect drag hunting, where hounds are trained to follow an artificial scent.

Tony Blair was prime minister at the time of the vote but has subsequently admitted he didn't feel strongly about the issue and that the controversy made him "feel like the damn fox".

Former home secretary Jack Straw explained in his book: "To me, banning it was a nonsense issue for a serious party making a determined bid for government after 18 years in opposition. It was best left alone.

"But it crept into the manifesto in a suitably ambiguous form - until Tony [Blair], who didn't think it important either, went on Question Time, was put on the spot and announced he'd support a ban.

"I went to see him the next day to ask him why. 'I'm very sorry, Jack,' he said. 'I misspoke.'"



FORMER PM: Tony Blair

It remains likely that future governments will consider there are more pressing political matters to debate rather than opening the hornets' nest of the foxhunting debate any time soon.



against it again.

"I think it is impractical, and does nothing to protect wildlife. I have seen no evidence that the law is being broken in Kent. I have also seen that the public's support for the Kent hunts has grown since this attempt to ban them. I hope that the next Parliament has a majority in favour of repealing the law."

We contacted local and national hunt saboteur organisations, but none responded.

There are five listed official hunts in Kent. They are the Ashford Valley Tickham Hunt, East Kent with West Street Hunt, Old Surrey Burstow and West Kent, East Sussex and Romney Marsh, and Southdown and Eridge Hunt.

So just what does the Hunting Act cover?

ACCORDING to the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Hunting Act 2004 bans the hunting with dogs of all wild mammals, and all hare coursing.

The official description of the act is as follows:

Its intention is to end a practice that many people feel causes unnecessary suffering to animals.

There are some tightly drawn exemptions to the Act, which allow hunting activities to take place in limited circumstances and with the consent of the occupier or owner of the land, such as:

** Ratting and rabbiting;*

** Stalking and flushing out with up to two dogs; and*

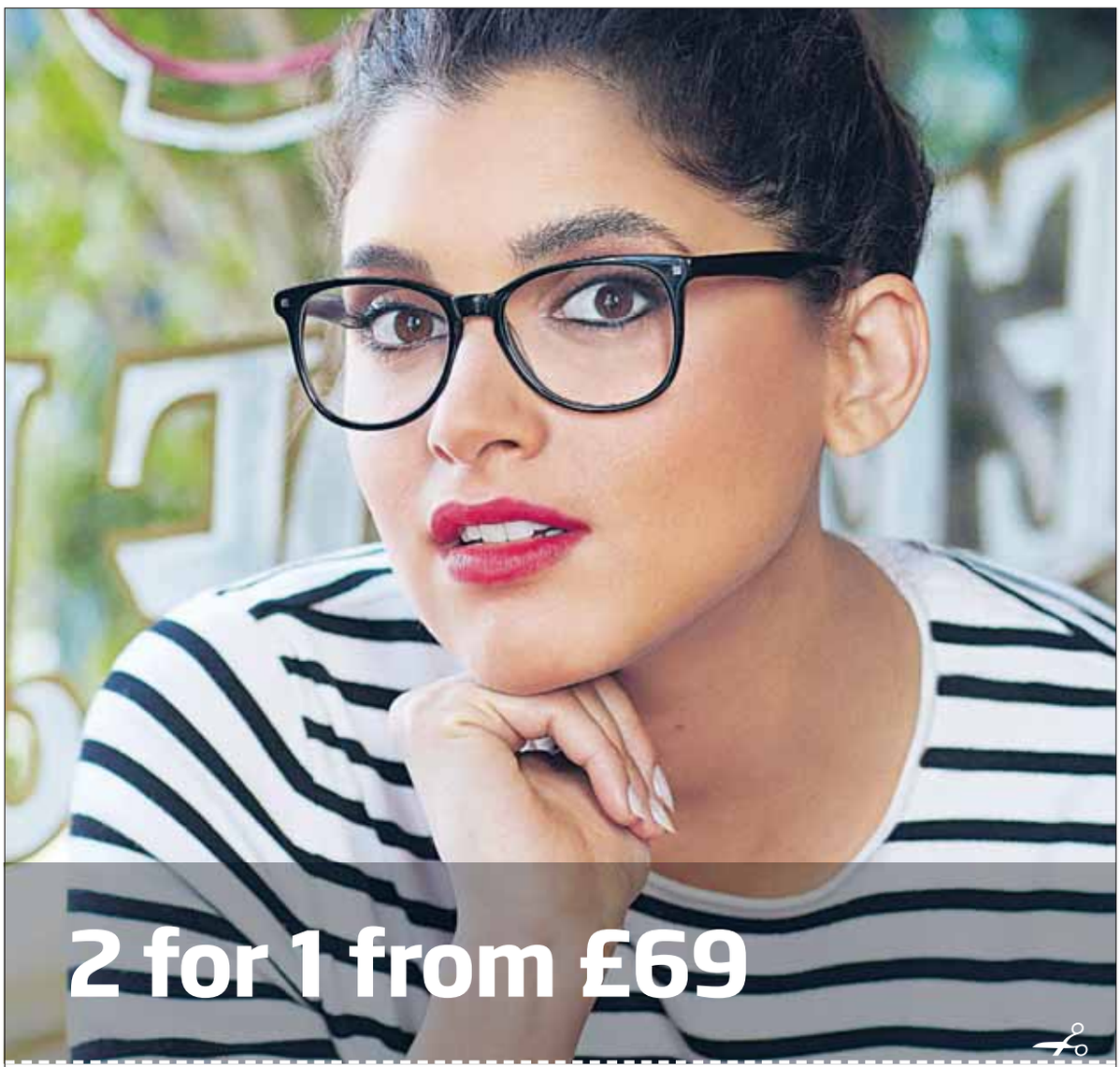
** Using a single dog under ground to flush out wild mammals, such as foxes, in order to protect birds kept for shooting.*

A person found guilty of an offence under the Act faces a fine of up to £5,000, and could have their dogs, vehicles or articles used in hunting confiscated.

Although this legislation has been contentious while it was being debated, and the Parliament Acts applied to bring the Act into law against the wishes of the House of Lords, the Government is satisfied that it meets human rights requirements, and that it is valid and enforceable.

What do you think? Share your views and join the debate. Write to: The Editor, KoS, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP.

Or send an email to us at: editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.



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Win a fabulous Christmas hamper

Looking for an unusual and special gift ? Deal Castle's pop-up Christmas shop could be just what you are looking for...

MAKE Christmas shopping a bit more special this year with a visit to Deal Castle's pop-up Christmas shop.

Situated in the castle's Tudor gatehouse, and open Saturdays and Sundays between 10am and 4pm, the shop will offer a range of unique gifts for all the family as well as delicious and unusual food and drink based on traditional English recipes.

Choose from Christmas marmalade or Boxing Date chutney at for £3.75 each, Butterscotch and Cream Liqueur £12.99 or Christmas mead priced at £10.50 as well as the exquisite Anno Kent Dry Gin which is £37.99.

Created in small batches in a traditional way in the heart of the Kent countryside, this gin combines local lavender with Romney Marsh samphire and a blend of other botanicals for a smooth and refreshing tipple, perfect for the festive season.

In addition, English Heritage is offering a 10% discount when you spend £20 or more until the end of December 2014 (exclusions apply).



And as an early Christmas present KoS has teamed up with English Heritage to offer one lucky reader the chance to win a hamper worth £99 (to be collected from the castle shop) and for 15 runners-up to win family tickets worth £13.50 to Deal Castle.

The castle was built by the order of King Henry VIII and is one of the finest Tudor artillery castles in England, and among the earliest and most elaborate of a chain of coastal forts, which also includes Calshot, Camber, Walmer and Pendennis Castles.

Visit www.english-heritage.org.uk for more information.



WIN: The exact composition of the hamper may vary from the items in this image

TO be in with a chance of winning a fabulous hamper answer the question below:

Who ordered the building of Deal Castle?

A) King Charles I
B) King Arthur
C) King Henry VIII

To enter text KOS followed Christmas14 and your answer then your first name, surname address and postcode to 80058, e.g. KOS Christmas14 C JOHN SMITH 2 THE STREET, TOWN, DV2 2GT.

Texts cost 50p plus your standard network rate. Winners will be selected from all correct entries. The promoter's decision is final. Usual terms and conditions apply. Please note if you should enter after the closing deadline of December 10, 2014, your entry will not be valid, but you still may be charged. SMS services are provided by BBA Digital Helpline Telephone 0844 3572403.

Alternatively enter by post to Deal Castle Competition, Archant KOS Media, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PP , including your answer, name, address, postcode and contact telephone number.

Good luck!









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JENNY ECLAIR: 'Everyone has to see me once.'

Jenny Eclair brings 'eclairious' show to Maidstone's Hazlitt

Comedy star says her audience can expect a '90 minute scream for attention'

COMEDIAN and novelist Jenny Eclair will be performing her current show – Eclairious – at Maidstone's Hazlitt Theatre on November 26.

According to the performer: "Everyone has to see me once, and those who have seen me once will want to see me again. After all, it's good to get out now and again.

"It's not like the old days, where you had to stay in to watch the telly. With the fancy technology we have nowadays, you can go out and catch up on your programmes anytime – you can't miss anything, so it's safe to leave the house."

Ms Eclair has been in the business for thirty years, she has been a stand-up comic since the last millennium, and was the first woman to win the coveted Perrier Award.

Apart from the stand-up she is also a writer, her third novel Life, Death & Vanilla Slices was released this July.

She says: "They are two very different disciplines. Writing for the stage is not such a schlepp. It's a sprint as opposed to a marathon.

"With stand-up, you collect lines as you go, and then you build the show around that.

"The show also evolves over the weeks that you are performing it.

"This show has been running for a while, so it's at a really lovely stage. You can't keep a show going forever though, and I do miss them once they are over."

Her previous stage work includes 2011's pantomime season as the fairy godmother in Cinderella at The Richmond Theatre.

She has also co-written and starred in Grumpy Old Women Live 2: Chin Up Britain on Tour in the West End as well as a number of other West End productions including Steaming, Mum's The Word and The Vagina Monologues.

Like many other performers, she has taken part in reality television coming third in I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here as well as appearing on Masterchef and The Apprentice: You're Fired.

She has hosted her own show on LBC radio, and is a regular contributor on shows such as BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour, Just a Minute and 7 Day Sunday (BBC Radio 5 Live).

She is also the author of Chin Up, Britain, The Book of Bad Behaviour and the co-author with Judith Holder of Grumpy Old Couples, and Wendy: The Bumper Book of Fun for Women of a Certain Age.

Over the years, the comedy circuit has changed for Ms Eclair.

She says: "I find that I enjoy performing more now. The rules have changed – I'm now only playing to audiences that I want to perform to.

"I don't have to play for the audiences I don't want to, so it's much easier."

She describes her show, Eclairious, as a '90 minute scream for attention'.

She says: "You get a first half of about 45 minutes, and second half of 40 minutes, and an interval.

"I find that lots of women drag their partners, and there might be a few gentlemen who want to leave at the interval – well, they're not allowed!"

■ Eclairious is at the Hazlitt Arts Centre in Maidstone . Tickets cost £18.50 call 01622 758611.

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A festive treat for any folk fans in search of a special Christmas

By Jamie Weir
jamie.weir@archant.co.uk



BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST: Set to leave the crowd breathless when they perform their Christmas special

AWARD-winning musical duo Belshazzar's Feast will take to the stage at St Edith Hall in Sevenoaks on December 19 to perform their Christmas special.

Paul Hutchinson and Paul Sartin make up the musical pair, and have wowed crowds across Europe and the United States since they got together in 1995.

The group formed when Mr Hutchinson and Mr Sartin came together with a shared passion to create inventive, intelligent folk music with the power to leave the crowd breathless.

Now in the band's 20th anniversary year, they will be paying a visit to St Edith's to dazzle the crowds with their Christmas spectacular.

The pair will be perform hit songs from their festive albums Frost Bites, released in 2009, and Stocking Fillers, released in 2012, as well as other tracks from their extensive list of crowd favourites.

Their musicianship starts with traditional folk music then adds a touch of classical and jazz, a dash of pop and music hall and crowns the performance with the group's trademark wry humour. It all adds up to a truly unique live performance.

Vocalist in the group, Paul Sartin plays a diverse array of instruments during performances, including oboe and violin.

His recording credits number BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards Winners and Nominees including Bellowhead and Faustus.

In 2007, he received a 75th Anniversary Award from the English Folk and Dance Society and his recent composition, The Hartlepool Monkey, for Streetwise Opera, was nominated for a BASCA award.

Paul Hutchinson plays lead accordion for the duo.

His credits include work with Hoover the Dog, Karen Tweed and the Playford Liberation Front.

His style of accordion is inspired by concertinas, church organ music and violins, bringing a unique sound to the pair's music.

Tickets cost £13 and will include mince pies and other Christmas surprises. They can be bought by visiting www.stedith-folk.co.uk or calling the box office on 01732 440470.

Small Town Kings gig



SMALL Town Kings will be performing an acoustic concert at the Avenue Theatre in Sittingbourne on December 8 at 8pm.

For tickets, call the box office on 01795 471 140.

East 17 stay another year

EAST London bad boys East 17 will be performing at The Front in Herne Bay on December 19.

The band, who peaked in the mid-90s are most famous for Christmas number one - Stay Another Day.

To buy tickets, visit www.allgigs.co.uk.

March into Christmas



THE Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines will be playing at the Leas Cliff Hall in Folkestone on December 3.

The tradition of the marching band dates back to the 18th century. Call 01303 228 600.

Dave Gorman in Dartford

COMEDIAN Dave Gorman will hit the stage at Dartford's Orchard Theatre.

The funny man, who's most famous for work like "Reasons to be Cheerful", "Are You Dave Gorman?"and "Dave Gorman's Googlewhack Adventure", will perform on December 2.

For tickets, call the box office 01322 220 000.





'King of soul' in Deal



GENO Washigton will be appearing at Deal's Astor Theatre on December 6. He has been described as the ''King of Soul''.

Tickets cost £22. Call the box office on 01304 370 220.

Funnyman Walsh in Kent

COMEDIAN Seann Walsh's 28 Tour has two dates in Kent.

He performs at Maidstone's Hazlitt Theatre on November 30. Call the box office on 01622 758611. He will then appear at Folkestone Quarterhouse on December 5. Call 01303 760750 to buy tickets.

Gravesend Xmas market



GRAVESEND Christmas market will be held at Community Square on November 29.

There will be more than 50 stalls selling a mixture of Christmas gifts including crafts, toys and jewellery.

Dartford decks the halls

DARTFORD will be hosting a carol concert at the bandstand in Central Park.

This year's show will include an extra-special element to commemorate the events of Christmas 1914. This year's concert takes place on December 10. Tickets are free to residents. Visit www.dartford.gov.uk/carols .

Snow fun and frolics in Canterbury winter play

By Maria Chiorando
maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk



SNOW Play by Lyngo Theatre will visit the Gulbenkian Theatre in Canterbury next month.

A children's play, it tells the story of winter deciding to move into Mr Green's house.

When Mr Green comes back from holiday to find Mr White there, it's the start of a series of adventures as Mr White covers the whole house in snow and Mr Green does everything to get him into the garden.

There is audience participation, with viewers making a snowman and joining in with a massive snowball fight.

But as it gets warmer, Mr White starts to melt and the tables might be turning...

Snow Play is a showdown between spring and winter, over who gets to stay and who has to go.

Mr White will be played by Frank Wurzinger, who has worked in theatre for more than 10 years and trained in mime, improvisation and as a clown. He studied at the Desmond Jones school of mime and physical theatre, graduated from Central School of Speech and Drama with an MA in performance.

Mr Green will be played by Andrew Irvine. Mr Irvine graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts in 1994 with a BA in Musical Theatre.

Since moving to the UK he has been involved in a variety of TV and stage productions, including Gateway Theatre's Company and has toured Denmark and Sweden with EC1 International's Jesus Christ Superstar. He has been seen at the Edinburgh festival in Kent-McCardle's production of Closer Than Ever, and was seen in several Cbeebies-Live arena spectaculars playing many characters including Big Cook.

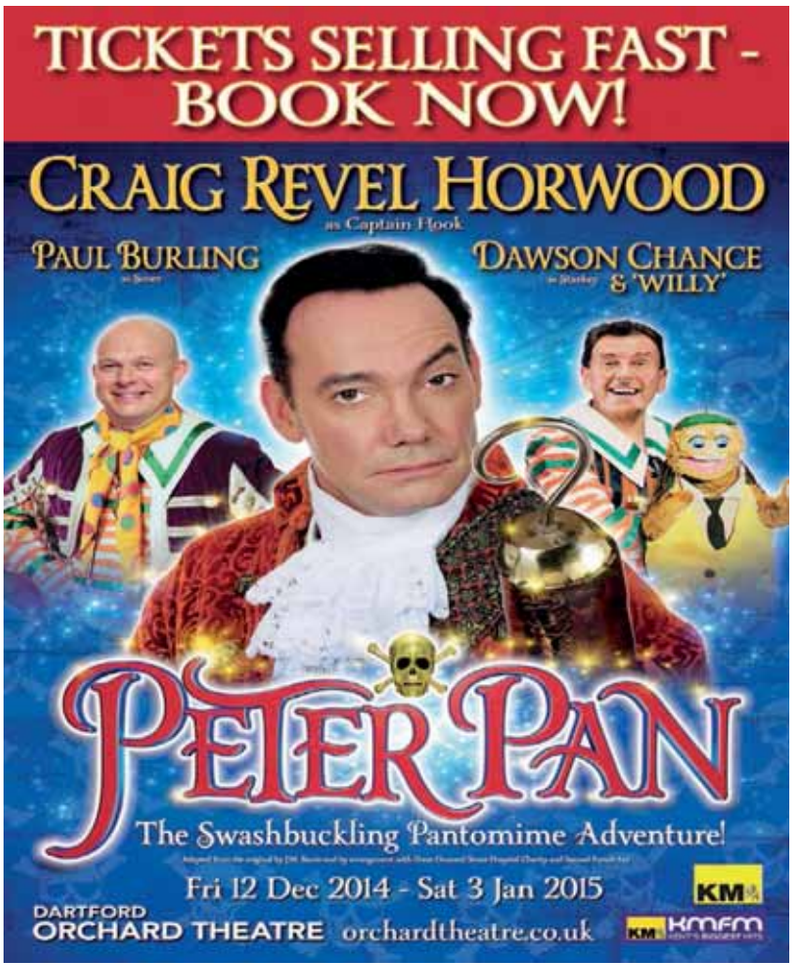
Snow Play will be at Gulbenkian from December 9 to 21 and is suitable for ages 3+ and their families. Tickets: £8.50. For information and tickets please visit www.thegulbenkian.co.uk, or call 01227 769075.



IN YOUR FACE: Time for a snow fight



MELTING?: Mr White starts to feel the heat



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Famously 'kooky' comedy comes to Canterbury

Comedian Tom Stade will bring his self-proclaimed 'weirdness' to the county later this month

CANADIAN comedian Tom Stade will be bringing his Decisions Decisions tour to Canterbury later this month.

He says: "Those who are already fans of my stuff can expect a wild ride. And those who aren't already fans... can also expect a wild ride.

"I have come up with a fantastic show about how many decisions we make in a day, and how all of those decisions affect us."

In a slightly bizarre conversation, the performer admits that stand-up is his favourite genre.

He says: "TV is like a commercial spot. It's great, but say you see a picture of a delicious juicy sausage on your TV, you can't taste it.

"With live performance, you get to taste that sausage. I guess in many ways, you could say that I am the delicious sausage!"

He grew up in British Columbia, in a mountain area he refers to as a 'drinking town'.

He says: "I loved my childhood and I think that where I grew up really helped me to hone in on my weirdness.

"It cultivated my way of thinking, and it also cultivated my style of comedy."

Mr Stade is happy to be back in the UK as part of the tour.

He says: "I love England and the madness that occurs here is what I'm into.



UNUSUAL: Comedian Tom Stade

"It's like the meeting place of the world, if the world had a house party, it would be in England."

He describes the county in his trademark kooky style.

"I have only been a couple of times, so I am still getting a sense of Kent," he says. "But it's cool, it's like the melting pot of the world."

He has certainly been busy recently, appearing on the small screen in Live at the Apollo, Michael McIntyre's Comedy Roadshow, Lee Macks All Star Cast, Dave's One Night Stand and Boyle's Variety Performance.

He is also a co-writer of Frankie Boyle's Tramadol Nights and a regular performer at Edinburgh Fringe.

He launched his 52-date headline tour Decisions Decisions in September, performing at a number of venues in the UK including The Lowry, Civic Hall, and Leicester Square Theatre.

He is optimistic about the reaction he will get to his show.

He said: "I get asked a lot why people should come to my shows.

"I never really know how to answer that. I would say that I know you'll have a great time – and you won't be disappointed if you come.

"Having said that though, I have been wrong in the past..."

■ Decisions Decisions is on at the Gulbenkian Theatre. For tickets visit www. uk.patronbase.com.

Decade of Bellowhead

■ BELLOWHEAD, an 11-piece band fusing folk, funk, rock, world, jazz, music hall and classical music, are 10 years old this year and they are delighted to continue their anniversary celebrations with the announcement of their biggest ever UK tour where they will be playing tracks from the new album plus all the old favourites.

They play at the Winter Gardens Margate on November 25. Call 01843 292795.

Don't mention the war

■ INTERACT with Basil Fawlty and his long-suffering wife Sybil and their confused waiter Manuel in this Fawlty Towers dining experience at the Orchard Theatre in Dartford on December 13.

Everything that can go wrong will and the audience will gain first-hand experience of the Fawlty's famous hospitality.

To book tickets, call 01322 220 000 or visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk.

Cleese at Assembly

■ JOHN Cleese plays the Assembly Hall Theatre in Tunbridge Wells on December 19.

The comic has appeared in Bond films and other classic movies, but is best known for his idiosyncratic turns in Monty Phython and Fawlty Towers, Mr Cleese will regale audiences with tales from his new book. So Anyway...

To book tickets, call 01892 530613.

Cabaret laid bare

■ LAID Bare Cabaret comes to the Marlowe Theatre on December 5.

The show encompasses a variety of acts from aerial acrobatics and fire to burlesque and music. This winter's cabaret will be compered by local award-winning magician, illusionist and mind reader Sam Beedle.

Contains adult themes. Not suitable for under 16's.

For tickets, call the box office 01227 787787.

It is with great sadness we announce the death of

SIDNEY G. BLACKMORE

at the age of 92 years old.

He was an Arnhem Veteran.

He died on the 6th November 2014 at Darent Valley Hospital

His funeral will be held at 2p.m. on the 26th November 2014 at Eltham Crematorium Falconwood.

Flowers, or donations to Cancer Research to be sent to Welham Jones Station Road Swanley Kent.

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In pursuit of the Northern Lights

TRAVEL REVIEW: Iceland

By Sarah Marshall

IT'S barely gone 10pm, the sun disappeared hours ago, and chaos has broken out in the car park.

Belly down on the tarmac, people are crawling between the wheels of stationary vehicles, feeling their way through the darkness, while other guests are dripping wet having leapt straight from the hot tub.

All have their gaze set in one direction: skyward.

The cause of such commotion is a luminous green streak rippling like a Mexican wave across the night sky.

Enjoying a riverside location miles away from any light pollution, four-star Hotel Ranga was the first property in Iceland to famously offer its guests an aurora wake-up call, with a night watchman ready to raise the alarm should the Northern Lights decide to put on a display.

Eager to escape the crowds, we jump in our 4x4 and try to navigate a minefield of blanket-wrapped bodies and flimsy tripods.

Driving along Route 1, the main highway which rings Iceland, I can just about make out the faint outline of colossal mountains, some so vast they swallow up the starry sky. After an hour of taking false turns into private farmland, we find a suitable setting for our aurora light show: Skogafoss waterfall.

Wearing head torches, we hike for 45 minutes to the top of the falls, following the sound of water crashing against the rocks. But it appears we've turned up too late for the light show, as only a dim green glow can be detected in our cameras. An anticipated encore never comes, and we finally return to Hotel Ranga at 3am.

It's tempting to spend the following day recovering in bed, but with so few daylight hours at this time of year, there's an urgency to get outdoors and explore. Plus, we have some important work to do, scouting out a suitable location for this evening's performance.

There are two essential prerequisites for viewing the Northern Lights: clear skies and a high level of electromagnetic energy in the atmosphere. Using Icelandic Met Office website en.vedur.is, which gives forecasts for both, we try to find the optimum spot. Disappointingly, most of the country is covered in dark green, meaning heavy cloud, and white spots (clear skies) seem to be few and far between.

In search of alternative landscapes, we travel northwest to the Snaefellsnes Peninsula National Park, where a ridge of snow-streaked mountains, compressed like a concertina, dominates the open grasslands and only a few solitary houses brave the battering winds.

Our focus for the night is Kirkjufell, a sci-fi setting of waterfalls framing a swirling, Walnut Whip of a mountain, that repeatedly features in award-winning photos.

Scrambling over rocks and slipping on patches of ice, I question the sanity – and safety – of climbing a waterfall at 4am.

With the lights being fairly uneventful, we agree to return at sunrise, when we're joined by four more equally unhinged photographers.

As our final night approaches, we've clocked up 1,200km on the mileage gauge, burned through nearly £200 of fuel, and still we don't have a satisfying Northern Lights photograph.

Although aurora activity is set to be a promising level four, with only a small white speck hovering above the westfjords on the en.vedur.is map, our chances are looking slim.

We debate returning to Jokulsarlon, which irritatingly promises to be cloud-free, but both agree that a 13-hour drive and night spent sleeping in the back of a car might finish us off.

When we arrive at Hotel Budir, a remote, romantic property that gazes out to sea, I'm glad we decided to stay; and when the alarm goes off at 4am, I'm secretly relieved to find it cloudy outside and accept our hunt is officially over. Instead, a few hours later, we stroll along the Budir beach, where angry waves have since retreated, leaving ripples in the sand.

In that moment, we have our own aurora wake-up call: the Northern Lights are sublime but in Iceland, daylight hours are equally enigmatic, if not more so.







SPECTACULAR: Some of the stunning views across the Icelandic skies

TRAVEL FACTS

ICELAND specialist, Regent Holidays offers an eight-day Iceland South and West fly-drive from £1,185 per person including flights with WOW airlines, eight days hire of a 4x4 and accommodation.

WOW air currently flies 10 times per week from London Gatwick to Reykjavik, with twice-daily departures on Monday, Thursday and Sunday. Fares start from £49 one way, including taxes.

Film Reviews by Damon Smith



The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part I
(12A, 123 mins) Sci-Fi/Thriller/Action/Romance

THE Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 1 is the calm before the storm of full-blown conflict. It's a slower burn than previous films and lacks some of the on-screen electricity since Katniss and Peeta are separated, but Lawrence burns bright as the eponymous "girl on fire". Effie's role is expanded from the book to bring some comic relief to the subterranean gloom. "Everything old can be made new again - like democracy!" she chirrups. Maybe so, but as Part 1 makes abundantly and agonisingly clear, you have to sacrifice innocent lives to sweep away the past.

Rating 8.5/10

The Homesman
(15, 123 mins) Western/Drama

A frontier woman's work is never done in Tommy Lee Jones' bleak and compelling feminist western. Not only does a mid-19th century miss have to cook and clean, she is also expected to pretty herself to attract a surly suitor to waltz her down the aisle in a society where men and pistols hold sway.
In the case of The Homesman's unconventional, spunky heroine, she also has to till the land, manage finances and compensate for a town full of cowardly, incompetent husbands, who put their own needs ahead of the women by their side. The Homesman takes risks with tone, pacing and plotting, but Jones' gamble lassos our attention.

Rating 7/10



Get On Up
(12A, 139 mins) Drama/Musical/Romance

GET On Up is a handsome biopic directed by Tate Taylor (The Help), which charts the rise of soul brother James Brown against a backdrop of civil unrest. Rising star Chadwick Boseman achieves a startling transformation to convincingly portray the musical legend. As a boy growing up in 1940s South Carolina, James (Jordan and Jamarion Scott) witnesses violent clashes between his parents. Consequently, his father delivers the boy into the care of Aunt Honey (Octavia Spencer), who runs a brothel. Get On Up is reminiscent of the Oscar-winning 2004 film Ray, which netted Jamie Foxx a golden statuette for his portrayal of rhythm and blues legend Ray Charles.

Rating 6/10

Have yourself a very 'Mary' Christmas

The queen of baking takes some time away from the stove to explain why there's more to life than soggy bottoms

By Jeananne Craig
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

SHE's the firm but fair baking queen who isn't impressed by shop-bought fondant icing but Mary Berry insists her loved ones won't be nervous when they present her with their own home-made offerings this Christmas.

"As a family, we all get together. Usually, I host it, and various members of the family bring a pudding, or they help me on Christmas morning or bring a batch of shortbread – even though I'm a cook, they love to bring their own things to share," she says in that warm but no-nonsense voice, now so familiar thanks to the mammoth success of The Great British Bake Off.

"Good friends who I've known for a long time, they're never nervous," insists the judge.

"We often go around to friends' places for supper. They often say, 'This is my mother's recipe, you might want to share it with your readers', or whatever. Our friends are very generous."

Bath-born Berry, who lives in Buckinghamshire with her husband Paul, is well-versed when it comes to avoiding festive hosting headaches.

"I think it's a good idea to get organised and know what you're up to," she says.

"The first thing is to rally your family and find out where you are for Christmas, and how many there are. Then you can start to buy some of your heavier things like tinned goods, and order your turkey.

"A big sheet of paper of what you plan does help. And then you can do some dishes you can freeze. You may choose to make something you can have after Christmas."

When it comes to turkey, Berry recommends "the best you can afford", and she'll also rustle up different stuffings, mince pies and Christmas pudding – although, she notes: "I nearly always find people nowadays don't choose to have Christmas pudding; they choose to have the lovely fruit salad with lots of exotic fruits in it, because they're quite full by the end of the meal."

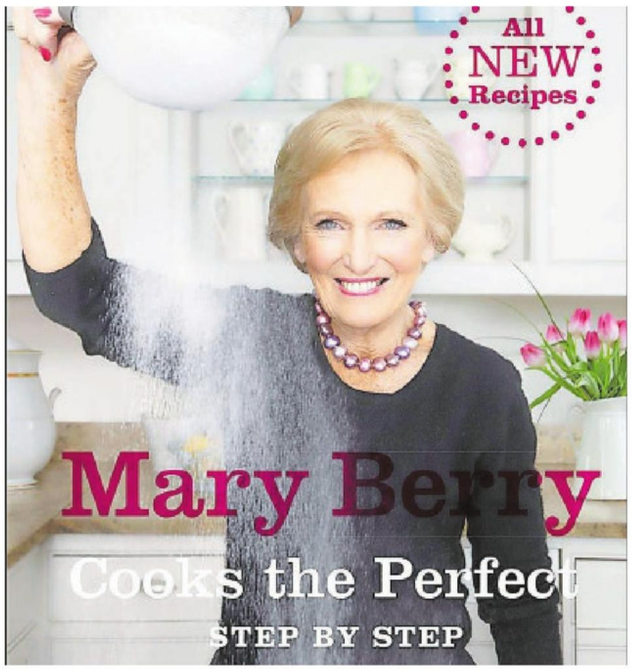


The 79-year-old has plenty of little helpers at Christmas, in the form of her five grandchildren: "They really do help, they're jolly good."

She insists life is all about balance. Berry makes time to play tennis every week ("not very well") and gets her nails done every three weeks ("my one treat"), but is incredibly busy day-to-day. On top of Bake Off, public appearances and product ranges, she also released a new book this autumn, Mary Berry Cooks The Perfect..., featuring new flavour combinations and modern twists on tried and tested favourites.

Berry, who, aged 21, trained at Le Cordon Bleu Paris, insists she still finds culinary inspiration after all these years.

"When I think of my lifetime, even recently, things like butternut squash have come in. People are now enjoying fennel, and different pastas, different rices, things change, new ingredients come; there are always things to learn."



BERRY DELICIOUS: the new book contains a wealth of recipes



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Advertisement Feature

Christmas Guide

THE picturesque 14th-century Red Lion pub, in the village of Hernhill near Faversham, dates back to the 1300s and still contains many original features.

And it is the ideal place for you to get into the real spirit of Christmas be it with friends or family.

It offers a selection of traditional English food alongside the frequently-changing seasonal specials.

Facilities include a brand new upstairs Champagne Bar which is perfect for large functions, a front patio overlooking the village green and a well-established pub garden.

The new Champagne Bar and restaurant are the perfect place to host your Christmas party – fantastic service and a choice of great food for all of your festive fun.

Mouthwatering main courses for the season include bronze turkey, with all the trimmings, roast sirloin of beef, oven baked salmon fillet with saffron mash or red pepper stuffed with spinach. Or perhaps pan fried duck breast with parsnip mash is more your thing?

The warm, cosy atmosphere at the Lion will make you want to stay all day and all night.

Should you decide to book for Christmas, please phone to book your date on 01227 751207, or contact the pub through www.theredlion.org.uk.

For parties of 10 or more, a non-returnable deposit is required, which can be paid once you have booked.





AS WE move ever closer to Christmas more and more of us are turning our attention to just what to buy our loved ones for gifts this festive season.

Children's gift lists seem to be getting more and more high tech each year and many people are worried that technology could be replacing traditional play.

The use of the imagination is something children should cherish and childhoods should foster.

So if you are looking for something a little bit different for your child, grandchild, niece or nephew and want to spark their creativity, get them active and develop their imaginations, why not consider a Stagecoach Theatre Arts gift voucher?

Starting at just £25, these will be valid until December 31 2015 and can be redeemed against term fees, holiday workshops or a two-week trial at the start of term.

It's a great opportunity for youngsters to perhaps discover a side to themselves they didn't know existed and build up their confidence levels.

Stagecoach Theatre Arts is the largest network of part-time performing arts schools for 4 to 18 year olds.

If you'd like to find out more about your local Stagecoach School, call 01233 611696 for the Ashford office or visit www.stagecoach.co.uk/ashford or call 01227 764110 for Canterbury - www.stagecoach.co.uk/canterbury. Or buy a voucher online at www.stagecoachgifts.co.uk.

FOR the fifth year running, Tankerton Christmas Market will take place at Whitstable Castle & Gardens on Sunday November 30, opening at 11am and closing at 4.30pm.

Once again, your Christmas shopping needs will be met by craft, charity and trade stalls spread across the three floors of Whitstable Castle, in the Castle Studio and in the grounds.

Stalls booked include candles, jewellery, handmade cushions, Christmas decorations, vintage and collectable items, cakes, jams, pickles, handmade soaps, glass fused pieces, crocheted hats, scarves and baby items, chocolate baubles, fudge, Phoenix Trading greetings cards, handmade books, and gluhwein and stollen from Whitstable Twinning Association. Plus much, much more.

Entertainment will include fairground rides suitable for small children, a static display by the Many Hoots Owl Rescue Centre, music from Dirk Wickenden of Kentishsax, face painting and glitter tattoos by Funtastic Faces in the Castle Studio, plus magic and balloon modelling by Uncle Myles.

Please note that there is no parking available on site but is available in surrounding roads and in the Gorrell Tank car park facing the harbour and just a few moments walk away.

The organisers reserve the right to alter any of the attractions should the need arise. See you there!





WITHOUT doubt, one of Santa's favourite jobs is to entertain visitors to the East Kent Railway at Eythorne.

He is provided with good grazing for his reindeer and secure parking for his sleigh at Shepherdswell and a most comfortable grotto at Eythorne Station.

It's a fact that many children these days are taken everywhere by car and are completely unaware of the comfort and indeed enjoyment of travel by rail.

So, a trip on the East Kent Railway is a treat even before a meeting with that red-robed gentleman.

Of course a Christmas drink and a mince pie, or two, is a small reward for parents joining in the fun. On top of all that, a carefully selected and labelled present just makes the day.

From Santa's point of view, it is so pleasant to entertain interesting children and there is always the chance someone, old or young, may be brought to see Father Christmas as a surprise birthday party.

Often a bit overwhelmed by the strangeness of it all, a surprising number of smaller guests have things to say to Santa or give him a reminder of their Christmas present list.

The East Kent Railway is a heritage railway, run entirely by volunteers, which travels the two mile route between Sheperdswell and Eythorne. For details, call 01304 832042 or email enquiries@eastkentrailway.co.uk.

CELEBRATE this festive season at Don Giovanni Italian Restaurant in Folkestone, in our beautifully refurbished restaurant, with a friendly atmosphere and relaxing ambience.

Established in 1990, this Italian restaurant is as popular today as it has always been.

Offering Italian comforts and superb cuisine, you can taste the excellent authentic Italian food and experience the personalised service on every visit.

There's a varied and extensive menu at reasonable prices.

Over the years Don Giovanni's has built up a fantastic reputation across Kent for our friendly service and homemade Italian cuisine. We will also cater for special diets.

Set in the heart of Folkestone, Don Giovanni's is the perfect place for workplaces to celebrate the festive season and we can seat up to 40 people so can cater for work parties both small and large.

Our Christmas menu has everything from a very traditional Arrosto Di Tacchino, roast turkey with all the trimmings to an Italian alternative of Vitello Val Dostana - escalope of veal in breadcrumbs with Parma ham and mozzarella.

If you are looking for a special night out check Groupon for our up to date offers and deals.

Call and book today for your Christmas party to avoid disappointment.

Don Giovanni, 18 Bouverie Road West, Folkestone CT20 2SZ. Call 01303 850 962 or email bookings and enquiries at bookings@dongiovanni.co.uk.



Advertisement Feature

Christmas Guide



THE Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway has been an integral part of the festive plans made by numerous local families for many years, with over 8,000 people enjoying their Santa Special experience in 2013.

All Santa Special trains depart from Hythe Station and arrive 30 minutes later at New Romney - just as Santa arrives on his sleigh.

The next hour is spent visiting Santa in his grotto, where each paying child receives a quality gift from him, enjoying seasonal refreshments for adults and children in the Heywood Buffet, having fun in the Model Railway Exhibition and playing in the 'snow'.

Take your seats in your designated carriage again and let one of RH&DR's world-famous locomotives transport you back to Hythe. Don't forget to browse the railways excellent shop for those last-minute gifts before you leave.

Ticket prices vary, depending on the date you travel. Prices range from £15 to £19.

For train departure times and full details, visit www.rhdr.org.uk where you can view and download the Santa Special leaflet. Santa Special tickets must be pre-booked and paid for in full at the time of booking. You can book your tickets by calling the railways friendly sales team on 01797 362353, 7 days a week between 9am and 5pm or online at www.rhdr.org.uk.

COME and meet Santa at one of Kent's best-loved attractions this Christmas when you take a magical steam train journey on the Kent & East Sussex Railway's popular Santa Specials.

New for 2014 will be later trains for visitors to enjoy the Christmas lights in Tenterden and the beautifully lit stations.

After riding on the carousel, meeting Santa and receiving a present, take the miniature train ride to meet the beautiful Snow Queen for a family photograph to take home.

All prices include an hour and ten minute train ride to meet Santa, a present for each child, and a photograph with the Snow Queen. Visitors can enjoy unlimited rides on the Victorian carousel.

For travel on Saturday, December 6, and Sunday, December 7, Saturday, December 13, and Sunday, December 14, Saturday, December 20, to Tuesday, December 23, the ticket prices are: Standard Class: £19. First Class: £22.50.

To travel on Wednesday, December 24, Christmas Eve, fares will cost £20 for travel in Standard Class and £23.50 to travel in First Class luxury.

A 10 per cent reduction on tickets will apply for groups of 20 or more on the first weekend. This event is always popular, and a hit with families of all ages so book early to secure your chosen day of travel.

Call 01580 765155 or visit the attraction's website at www.kesr.org.uk to purchase tickets. Trains operated from Tenterden Town Station, TN30 6HE.





WITH a little help from the elves, Father Christmas has recreated his magical winter wonderland at Tenterden Garden Centre and Canterbury Garden Centre.

You can visit him every Saturday and Sunday at the Tenterden site in the run up to Christmas, in his elf-built grotto from November 22 to December 21. He'll be ready to welcome children between 10.30am - 4pm.

For just £5 per child, you gain entry to the grotto, will receive a gift wrapped present and a ride on the vintage carousel. You can have a professional photo with Camera Craft by Geoff Partner, as an optional extra.

Visit Father Christmas at: Tenterden Garden Centre, Appledore Road (B2080), Nr. Tenterden, TN30 7HT. Twitter: @TenterdenGCKent. Facebook: TenterdenGardenCentre.

Or find Father Christmas in his largest grotto yet at Canterbury Garden Centre.

Navigate your way through the forest to meet Father Christmas and if you've been good this year he might even give you a present!

He'll be appearing courtesy of the Whitstable & Herne Bay Lions every Saturday and Sunday from November 22 to December 21, between 11am and 3pm. The Groves Coffee Shop & Restaurant will be open too for those all-important mince pie breaks.

Visit him at: Canterbury Garden Centre. Canterbury Road (A291), Herne Common, Nr. Herne Bay CT6 7LJ. Twitter: @CanterburyGC1, Or follow us on Facebook: CanterburyGC.

IT'S beginning to look a lot like Christmas at Saltwood on the Green...

It's our first Christmas since opening this April and we could not be more excited!

Let us help you get into the festive spirit with our holiday season menu and cocktails.

We're featuring traditional winter favourites with some special Christmas touches, including hot smoked salmon or cheese soufflé starter.

Goose breast with chestnuts or venison with salt baked swede for mains... and our own version of Christmas pudding.

Throw in our winter warmer cocktails (Smoking Bishop and Kentish Winter Julep, anyone?) or our Mince Pie Martini, and finish the evening with an Egg Nog and Spiced Rum Coffee.

Saltwood on the Green sits squarely but quietly in the heart of the village that gave us its name.

We have a warm and friendly atmosphere, with a casual but intimate dining room that is the perfect backdrop for your personal or corporate festive booking.

Call us now or book through our website.

And don't forget Saltwood on the Green offers food and drink at any time of the day - so pop in just for a coffee, or even breakfast. As well, of course, as lunch and dinner.

To contact us call 01303 237 800 or visit www.saltwoodrestaurant.co.uk.





THE amazing success of the Canterbury Stagecoach School has continued unabated over the last 12 months.

Following the performances of over 60 children in the professional tour of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat at the Marlowe Theatre, the school provided 36 children for the production of the classic Evita at the Marlowe in March and April of this year.

The show, currently at the West End, gave the children the opportunity to work alongside pop star turned musical performer, Marti Pellow, with 20 parents enjoying the experience as extras.

And the good news shows no signs of slowing.

In March 2015 one of the school`s students, nine-year-old Mia Drummond, has gained the part of Young Fiona in the Marlowe`s production of Shrek - the West End hit which is embarking on a UK tour.

The school continues its highly successful examination work with a 100 per cent pass rate in the acting examinations of the LAMDA organisation.

Of the 68 entrants, to date 26 youngsters have gained distinction and a further 40 passed with merit; many of whom took the highest acting awards of bronze, silver and gold medals.

The school provides specialist teaching for all abilities in singing, dance and drama.

Anyone wishing to enrol at the school should contact principal Alan Goodwin via the website www.stagecoach.co.uk/canterbury or by phoning on 01732 824758.

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WELCOME to the latest edition of Pure Weddings, in which we take a look at some of the latest fashions, foods and ways to make your day truly memorable.

Whether you're planning a large-scale event, or an intimate do with just the closest friends and family, we hope you will get some inspiration from our latest publication.

And if you're set for a winter wedding in the glorious county of Kent, the very best wishes for you.



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The long and short of it

Why more brides are going short



No-one treading on your hem. No train trailing through the mud. No need for a coterie of 50 people to accompany you to the toilet because it would be easier to get out of a spacesuit while handcuffed than to lift up your own wedding dress.

While for many brides, no dress will do other than a spectacular full-length meringue, shorter dresses are becoming increasingly popular – both for the practical advantages and for their chic appearance.

After all, it was good enough for Audrey Hepburn on her wedding day.

If you're not someone who would normally flounce around in a giant puffed-up gown, it's worth giving serious thought to a short dress.

Many women feel under pressure to have a textbook traditional wedding but after all, it is your day and you need to be comfortable.

If you're not quite at ease, no-one else will be – because the one thing all your guests want is for you to have the special and incredible day that you deserve.

There are many advantages to wearing a short dress rather than a longer gown.

It's often less expensive – a typical wedding dress will probably set you back the best part of a four-figure sum – and of course it's more lightweight, which makes it easier to wear.

Who wants to look back at their wedding day and remember not being able to dance around properly?

And it's easier to transport too – which is definitely something to consider if you're travelling a long way to your wedding.

And, most importantly, short dresses look great on everyone.

They give you the chance to show off your legs, and the wedding shoes you're almost certainly in love with.

And, unless you're a particularly messy eater, they're easy to keep clean too, unlike a dress with a huge train which will be filthy by the end of the evening.

Even better, you can wear it again and again to any reasonably formal occasion – apart from someone else's wedding, of course.

Unless you're getting married somewhere terribly cold (in Newcastle in December, the only thing a short dress will show off will be your goose bumps), there's almost certain to be a short dress to suit whatever kind of wedding you're having.

Whether it's 'floaty' chiffon for a beach wedding, traditional lace for a church wedding or a simple, classic shape for a register office.

You could even buy two dresses – a long one for your special moment during the ceremony, and a short one to have fun in afterwards.

Designers are catching on to the trend, and many are now offering different lengths, from above the knee to classic tea length gowns.

Weddings at the Channel Suite

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Alternative Ideas

Make your big day uniquely yours

With couples becoming more and more savvy at stamping their own identity on their special day, it can be difficult to be original.

According to wedding planner Alana Fallon the key is to stay true to your vision.

She explains: "Many couples will have something that makes them unique, be it a love of sport, something geeky or maybe cooking.

"If there is something like this, it can be incorporated into your wedding day, either in subtle or more obvious ways."

Jane and Christian Robbs were brought together through a shared love of gardening.

Jane explained: "I love being outside, and had recently started working on an allotment. Our mutual friend Dave introduced us because he knew Christian was on the waiting list for one.

"Gardens have always been really important to me – I used to grow roses and some vegetables with my dad when I was younger, and that was something I was keen to continue doing when I left home.

"Christian is less green-fingered, but wanted to try out his hand at a vegetable plot.

"It was a love of gardens that brought us together, and then sharing my allotment that made us grow a real bond."

When Christian proposed, their first thought was to have an outside ceremony to symbolise their shared love of plants and flowers.

Jane says: "Unfortunately we found out that you can't have a legally binding ceremony outside in England.

"We got round it by having a private legal register office ceremony, then had a Humanist blessing – the bit we considered to be the 'real' ceremony – on our actual wedding day.

"Everyone said how it was really unusual, and very 'us'."

Another trend some have started incorporating is the idea of the 'eco-wedding' – where environmentally-conscious couples try and leave as small a carbon footprint as possible.

This can affect clothing (second hand is more eco-friendly), transport, food (meat has a higher carbon footprint) and stationery.

Ms Fallon says: "I worked with one couple who were very keen to incorporate their eco-friendly lifestyle into their wedding.

"They felt that they are well-known to their friends and family as being very environmentally-conscious

"As well as choosing a venue that is an ecology pavilion, they reduced their stationery by using a virtual invitation (a video they made and emailed the link for) and using a big chalk board instead of order of services.

"The bride wore a dress that was up-cycled from an older, second-hand dress, and they bought most of the food for their vegetarian cold buffet from artisan, local producers."



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"Everything had that individual stamp on it, and had been thought about very carefully."

An idea can be more subtle as well – for Jenni Stevens, she had always had more male friends than female.

She says: "Suddenly, just because I was getting married, everyone expected that I would have a large crowd of female friends surrounding me.

"As someone who has always felt more comfortable in the company of men, I didn't see why I should discard my best friends just because of tradition.

"In the end, I decided to have a best man, as well as a couple of groomsmen.

"Conversely, my husband ended up having a best woman as well as his ushers, so it was very much a wedding of equality!"

Other couples choose to keep to a more traditional style wedding, but have touches that show off their personalities.

Paul and Denni Masterson are both music lovers, with Denni also being a classically trained singer.

She says: "We are known as musos among our friends. We both love loads of different types of music, and although I am a classically trained singer, I love a lot of new music as well.

"We actually met at a hard rock festival, and have gone to loads of gigs together.

"For us, a really important thing on the day was the music.

"We had a church ceremony followed by a reception at a hotel, so it was quite traditional in that respect, but we did want to have a flavour of the thing that makes us 'us'.

"At the church, we made sure we had the full choir.

"We decided that rather than the organ, we would have a string quartet.

"Then as people walked into our reception venue, there was a folk guitarist, a flutist during the wedding breakfast, a band playing covers of classic rock and roll for the beginning of the dancing, and then a harder rock band as the night drew on.

"One of the highlights was a barbershop quartet performing for our first dance.

"As we know so many musicians, it was very affordable, we didn't pay our friends, as they performed as a gift for us, so we just fed and watered them.

"We had to pay the church for the choir, but that was a donation, so wasn't too costly."

They also incorporated touches into their decor, stationery and even favours that represented their love for all things musical.

Denni says: "We used old CDs hanging from the ceiling on clear fishing wire. It sounds a bit strange, and we weren't sure at first, but when we'd covered the room, it looked amazing, like a huge discoball.

"As our favours, we wanted to do old-school style mix tapes, but of course no-one uses cassettes anymore.

"But we adapted the idea, and made mix CDs, with some of our favourite tunes, including some of the music from the wedding, and, for the careful listeners, a special bonus track that we put right at the end that was a track we wrote and recorded ourselves.

"Paul wrote the lyrics, and I wrote the music, then we performed it together in a friend's studio.

"Even our stationery followed the music theme, with us using old sheet music, that we faded then typed onto for our invitations and menus.

"It was time-consuming, but worth it."

Ms Fallon says: "I have seen more and more couples getting more confident with putting their own stamp on their day.

"Partly it's due to weddings becoming less formal in general, but a lot of it is also to do with who's footing the bill.

"It used to be the bride's family who paid for most things.

"Now more and more couples are paying for their weddings themselves, so they don't have that pressure of pleasing everyone – it's more about a celebration of who they are as a couple, and the glue that holds them together."

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Wedding breakfast











Without a doubt, feeding your hungry wedding guests can be one of your major expenses.

The wedding breakfast – so-called as it is the first meal a the happy couple will eat as husband and wife but can take place at any time – is a very important part of your reception.

Trends are changing though, and there are more options than the classic sit-down, three-course meal.

Michael Reeves is a catering manager, who during peak wedding season will oversee several weddings, a month.

He says: "There will always be those who want a traditional meal – and why not, it's a lovely way to dine.

"But there are lots of others, who for reasons of cost or even because they want to be a bit different, want to look at other options.

"A very popular choice we have at the moment is the bowl food concept.

"These are like super-sized canapes in a way. Most couples go for three or four bowls per guest.

"It's cheaper because you need less staff, especially less chefs as the food will generally be bowled-up in advance, rather than being plated as it is served.

"It can play to a foodie-theme nicely. For example, if you want a classic British theme, you could have bowls of cottage pie, fish and chips (chips have to be fried on site) toad in the hole, and bangers and mash.

"This works across all cuisines, Italian, pan-Asian and others. And, of course, you can have cold bowls including salads."

The bowls can be supplemented with canapes if needed, and dessert can be dessert bowls served by roving waiters, or a dessert buffet.

Another popular option is the roast, where a full joint along with sides of roasted vegetables are delivered to the table.

Mr Reeves says: "Along with the food, we will take a carving knife, apron and stack of plates to each table.

"Then one person at the table carves and plates up the veg.

"This is becoming more popular, as it is cheaper for the couple, as they need fewer staff, and because the tables can really get involved with each other.

"It's the same quality food you would expect from a three-course meal, but a much less formal environment.

"It's quicker to serve too, so you don't have the tables at the back waiting for their main while the top table have empty plates in front of them."

And of course the ever-popular buffet has had a makeover too, with locally sustained, more ecological and artisan food now taking centre-stage.

Pictures: Phil Drinkwater









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Ukip seek cheap political points

FOR several years, I have attended the Chatham community remembrance Sunday service in Victoria Gardens.

It has always had support from local politicians like Jonathan Shaw, Tracey Crouch and Vince Maple.

Their party affiliations have never been shown on their wreaths as this act of remembrance is far beyond party politics.

Consequently, I was very surprised and disappointed to see a Ukip representative laying a wreath bearing a Ukip logo.

I know from speaking to others afterwards that people, whatever political party they support, found this to be distasteful and highly inappropriate at such a service, where tributes have never before shown political affiliations.

Stephen Bowman,
Rainham

Ration fuel to combat car rise

PERHAPS the only positive cure for 'carmageddon' (KoS, last week) is fuel rationing.

To my knowledge, it has been done twice in the past and today's technology should make administration of such a remedy relatively easy.

Once established, control of the problem would be facilitated.

I own a car and abuse the freedom it provides like countless millions of other.

If rationed, moderation will prevail with benefits to ourselves and our environment.

KF Jones,
Faversham

Tax homes with two cars or more

THE issue with too many cars on our roads can surely surprise precisely no one? We are a nation which is obsessed with owning cars and then get collectively surprised when the roads struggle to cope with the sheer number.

The rise of the car has made some of Kent's prettiest villages nothing other than narrow highways, where rather than envy the pretty homes that line their streets, you feel sorry for them having to step out on to a pavement and run the risk of an articulated lorry bearing down on them at speed.

We need to have a think about what's important. And the harsh reality is that we may simply have to think long and hard about taxing homes with two or more cars in. Surely that would be a sensible solution?

How often do you drive past residential homes today where four or five cars are parked. It's crazy.

Patrick Deller,
Gillingham

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Crossing changes: 'Too little, too late'



I LIVED in Dartford for 28 years. In the earlier years there was just one tunnel under the Thames, taking the traffic both north and south ('Carmageddon' KoS, last week).

And for a while it worked.

But by 1980, when the second tunnel was opened, it was obvious the traffic was beginning to get out of control and more was needed.

It is everyone's right in this country to have their own means of transport, especially if they live in the country, or where public transport is almost non-existant.

The problem is that this country is not built for the amount of traffic that now travels on it. We are not the USA where highways go on forever, nor Australia where you can travel for hours and not see a soul.

We are quickly becoming more congested than ever.

The Dartford tunnel and bridge are often blocked during the week and traffic coming off of the Channel Tunnel does not help either.

Another crossing further down is needed now and not in three or four years time as by then we will be well and truly gridlocked.

All this should have been ages ago and the roads crisis should have been obvious at least 20 years ago.

I do not drive and I am glad I do not, but people do rely on their cars, vans and lorries for pleasure and work. Hopefully removing the toll booths at the crossing will help. We can only wait and see , but I fear that it is too little too late.

SJ Kemp
New Ash Green

Fracking comes at a high cost

I BELIEVE commercial scale fracking in the UK is going to be at the expense of the environment, communities and individuals.

Firstly, I think we should all be deeply concerned about the effect commercial-scale fracking will have on the British countryside and its dwindling biodiversity.

Already under intolerable pressure because of development and habitat destruction, the countryside, and all those people who appreciate its green quiet, now have to face the spectre of its wholesale industrialisation if fracking goes ahead.

Each well will be nearly two acres in size even for a test well and if it is commercially viable, up to 10 wells could be drilled around the site.

And if the American pattern is followed here, there could be hundreds of wells in suitable areas.

Each frack in each well uses huge amounts of water and thousands of truck movements will be needed to each well to deliver equipment and water and to remove waste water. How much more traffic can England stand?

Then there is the effect fracking on a commercial scale will have on communities and individuals. Because of new laws passed by the Government, individuals now have no right to refuse fracking beneath their houses, or land, and moreover will have to tolerate the fracking companies putting any substance they choose beneath a property and leaving it there with no environmental checks.

We only have to look at the experiences of wide-scale fracking in the US to know that all such operations come with risk and there will be mistakes and contamination.

Methane leaking from wells that have been abandoned there is a serious issue, particularly as it is a much more dangerous greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.

And because we are such a small and crowded island any mistakes made here will be all the more serious.

It is time we stopped burying our heads in the sand, faced up to the reality of climate change, and pledged to safeguard future generations by switching as quickly as possible to a low carbon economy and rejecting fracking for new fossil fuels.

Sue Sullivan,
Deal

Could shale not save our future?

THIS may be a little controversial, but isn't fracking potentially quite a good thing?

It's not the 'right on' thing to say, but if we were able to access a new source of energy it would lessen our reliance on the Middle East and make us more self-sustainable. All good things surely?

Toby Jones,
Maidstone

Let us not forget power of unity

LAST week, I discovered to my great pleasure that Kent on Sunday had returned to our local shop after a period of absence.

Your editorial put a finger on the neglected key issue in the current commemoration of the Great War.

Here in Westerham, we have a powerful statue of Sir Winston Churchill, whose message about the importance of uniting Europe seems to have been largely forgotten by his own party.

As you say, you cannot predict what is around the corner. Next year, we will presumably be celebrating the Battle of Waterloo when Wellington finally overcame the threat of Napoleon to Europe. But a victory only assured by the arrival of the Prussians. An Asian historian I studied at Cambridge wrote about the 'civil war of Europe'!

David Boston,
Westerham

Is nuffing wrong with our dialect?

I AM Sussex born and bred, with a Sussex dialect (Kent dialect debate, KoS, 19.10).

Why in Kent does there not appear to be a 'th' in the Kent alphabet? Thus we hear nothing pronounced 'nuffing'?

Is this inherited through family connection or school? Could someone say?

HC Bassett,
New Romney

images of kent



Ramsgate Marina
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INCLUDED: Escorted throughout • Return rail travel from London St Pancras (from Ebbsfleet on request) to Limoges • 5 nights half-board stay at a 3 star hotel in Perigueux • Excursions • Transfers abroad



Krakow - the Royal City by Air

8 June, 2015
5 days half board, from £**599**pp • Quote: PL6-KOS

Poland's delightful city of Krakow, known as the Royal city, is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a must-see destination for all travellers. Staying in a modern 4-star centrally-located hotel, we are just steps away from the Medieval centre with its vast array of bars and cafés, lively and vibrant squares and markets, Renaissance arcades and Baroque structures. Accompanied by a fully-licensed guide we will explore Krakow and beyond with visits to the renowned, UNESCO listed, Wieliczka Royal Salt Mines and an optional visit to Auschwitz.

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout abroad • 4 nights half-board stay at a 4 star hotel in Krakow • Excursions and admissions as stated • Return flights with luggage from Gatwick to Krakow - supp't may apply • Transfers abroad



Nice Flower Parade, Lemons, Mimosa & Monaco

by Rail • 18 February, 2015
8 days semi all inclusive, £**899**pp • Quote: NP2-KOS

This super holiday, taking in the French Riviera's premiere floral festivals, starts with a glass of Bubbly at St Pancras' famous Champagne bar before an afternoon departure on Eurostar to Paris. After an overnight stay we continue by TGV train to Nice then to Diano Marina on Italy's Riviera of Flowers. Enjoy free drinks every night at the hotel and visits to Nice Flower Parade, Mimosa in St Maxime, Menton's Fête du Citron and Monaco.

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout • Champagne Check-in at London St Pancras • Return rail travel from St Pancras (from Ebbsfleet on request) to Nice • 1 night hotel B&B in Paris • 6 nights at a 3 star hotel in Diano Marina - half board PLUS free drinks 6pm to 11pm every night • All excursions • Transfers abroad



4-star Nice Carnival, Menton Lemon Festival & Monaco

by Air • 27 February, 2015
4 days, £**499**pp • Quote: NC2-KOS

This super holiday takes in the French Riviera's premiere Carnivals and Monaco. Nice Carnival is the most popular winter event on the French Riviera. Sleepy Menton bursts into a riot of colour with its huge citrus display garden. We stay at a 4-star hotel ideally located on the legendary Promenade des Anglais and just a few minutes from the airport and town centre - the Grand Flower Parade passes the front of the hotel.

INCLUDED: Return flights with hand luggage from Gatwick to Nice - supp't may apply • 3 nights B&B at a 4-star Hotel in Nice • Visit by coastal train to Monaco & Menton Lemon Festival, including entry to the citrus display garden • Return airport to hotel transfers • Services of our Tour Manager abroad

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By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk







STRONG 4X4 HERITAGE: The latest Jeep Cherokee (left) offers affordable off-road ability, the all-new Jeep Renegade (above) and the top of the range Grand Cherokee (below). Still a favourite of the off-road community, the revered Wrangler (bottom) has wartime roots.

4x4 Jeep ability wrapped up with family practicality

IT needed a tough recession to finally convince 4x4 fans that they didn't actually need all-wheel drive to get the 'funky chunky' looks they crave.

Instead, economical front-wheel drive 'soft roaders' have become the recent norm rather than those with full 4x4 kit.

But what if you still need decent yet affordable off-road ability wrapped up in a family size car? It would seem that Jeep – America's 4x4 star – has the best answer with the latest Cherokee, launched this year.

It is also available with front-wheel drive, but Jeep – true to a 4x4 heritage born on Second World War battlefields – has ensured that the latest Cherokee can still hack it off-road.

But I recently drove the 140bhp diesel in 4x4 format and was impressed too by its high speed refinement – not something you expected from previous Cherokees.

At the other extreme – a twisty rural lane – it showed decent grip and a modest yet well-controlled lean on the bends.

Jeep will try the same blend of serious 4x4 clout and on-road practicality early next year when it launches the all-new Renegade, aimed at recruiting younger customers who might later upgrade to other Jeep models.



The Renegade is Jeep's first entry into the small SUV cum crossover sector dominated by Nissan's Qashqai and Juke, with other key rivals being the Skoda Yeti and Vauxhall Mokka.

The difference is that the Renegade has Jeep's 4x4 heritage – one still highlighted by the long-running Jeep Wrangler.

This model is still revered by off-road enthusiasts and can trace its roots – and looks – back to the original wartime Jeep.

At the other extreme is Jeep's flagship model, the Grand Cherokee. As the name suggests, it's the big brother to the Cherokee, but still competitively priced against key rivals.

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All that Jazz with added fizz and pizzazz

Honda's supermini-cum-MPV is a proven practical star, but the 1.4 petrol-engined Si version is best for buyers needing sporty looks and that bit more zip...

Honda Jazz 1.4 i-VTEC Si

Price:	from £14.995
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★★
Value:	★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	Nissan Note

THOUGH it's called the Jazz, Honda waited an age to give us a variation on the theme.

In the meantime, this capacious supermini (from £11,695) played the same old tune, proclaiming its versatility, reliability and general niceness; not very jazzy, but a melody appealing to an older, easy listening fanbase.

Eventually though, the Jazz Si (£14,550) arrived, widening the audience for this admirable little car.

What you get is bespoke spoilers front and back, side skirts, privacy glass, and eye-catching 16-inch two-tone alloys. Visually, it's a revelation for a tall car that looks closer to a small people carrier than the supermini suggested by its compact on-road footprint.

Attempts to 'jazz' the interior are less effective even if everything works well and feels robust, but the Si suspension is tauter for improved straight-line stability and body control, while the power steering has been tweaked for improved response.

The standard Jazz is a driver pleaser anyway, but these changes do sharpen it without affecting around-town versatility.





JAZZ WITH EXTRA PIZZAZZ: Honds'a versatile and spacious Jazz supermini is known for its impressive passenger-swallowing ability and the Si version adds sportier looks and an extra bit of driver appeal to the range.

However, the Si doesn't quite walk the talk on the power front; the 98bhp 1.4-litre petrol engine and five-speed gearbox is simply one of two conventional engine options available across the Jazz line-up, the other being an 89bhp 1.2-litre.

The 1.4 is good enough for 0-62mph in 11.8 seconds, but that's not quite the pizzazz required for a sporting Jazz, while a six-speed gearbox would make for more relaxed motorway cruising.

But the Si does look sporty and the Jazz range has a string of customer satisfaction and reliability awards to its name, plus a 'Made in Britain' stamp as one of several Honda best sellers built at the Japanese marque's modern plant in Swindon.

The car's ace though is a Tardis-like capacity within relatively compact dimensions, plus clever packaging and lots of other stowage space - it's a downsizer's dream.

The boot is one of the biggest in the supermini class and has a multi-functional boot floor.

The rear seats also fold flat quickly for rapid transformation into a van offering an impressive 883 litres of capacity.

The car seats five comfortably – rear legroom is excellent – and has good visibility out of a glassy cabin.

Even with the 1.4-litre Si engine, you can also average around 50mpg; Honda doesn't offer a diesel, preferring a relatively expensive petrol-electric hybrid Jazz IMA option (from £17,150), averaging around 10mpg more than the 1.4-litre Si, but only slightly faster in acceleration.

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Women Seeking

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FEMALE 38, attractive, African, single mum, seeks male, 35-50 for nights out, socialising, friendship and fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412793**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel No: 0905 002 1883 Box No: 413399**

PETITE slim blonde 39yrs, pretty big blue eyes, looking for similar easygoing older male to put a spark back into my life, enjoy nights in/out and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412327**

LUCY, 32yrs, blonde lady seeks naughty boys of any age for no strings fun. **Tel No: 0905 002 1887 Box No: 413443**

WIDOW 70, lonely, seeking gent, 70-75 to bring a bit of sparkle back in life, likes theatre, cinema. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412475**

KAREN, 42yrs, attractive and broadminded, seeks no strings fun with chap any age, must be discreet. **Tel No: 0905 002 1891 Box No: 407953**

KATIE 26yr old pretty slim blue eyed blonde looking for evening entertainment with open-minded discreet guy, any age. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412319**

JANE, 40s, tall, blonde leggy lady, honest and keen to meet gent for fun times. I can make you happy! **Tel No: 0905 002 1895 Box No: 361745**

JANE 29yr old horsey female, loves the outdoors, cycling, as well as duvet days, WLTM not too serious male for a hopefully normal relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412315**

ADVENTUROUS sexy lady, 38yrs, married but seeks no strings fun with discreet man, any age. I'm tall, slim and dominant. Aca. **Tel No: 0905 002 1937 Box 415301**

MARY 5ft 6in size 12 blonde, nice personality, good conversationalist, interesting, lots of interests WLTM likeminded caring, happy male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412169**

SALLY, 38yrs large cuddly lady seeks slim men for discreet meetings. **Text Only 4550193**

CLARE 36yrs successful single mum, independent, employed with OHAC, size 10, green eyes, pretty, likes swimming, family life, seeking male with similar values and interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412053**

TRUDY 36yrs, wltm broadminded men of any age/area for day-time meetings. **Text Only 4550194**

SHARON 32yrs and still soul searching for Mr Right, I enjoy keeping in shape, caring for people, seeking loving respectful guy who also knows a good time. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412049**

MELANIE, 38, slim, blonde and bored. Call if you want no strings fun. **Text Only 4550198**

SLIM petite, attractive brunette, 56, British/Russian origin, excellent cook/home maker, seeks cultured male for serious relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412129**

JENNI, 52 bored housewife wants no strings fun with younger chap. **Text Only 4550197**

FREYA 33 6ft blonde, loves dancing and have a good time, employed, own home, one son, seeking similar laidback guy/dad for dates, chats and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412045**

MARILYN really nice curvy tactile female, loves romantic walks, cosy nights in, quality times, looking for nice male to spend time and fall in love with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411871**

JAN 5ft 6ins, dark hair/eyes, nice smile, likes music, travel, countryside, animals, employed, OHAC, looking for companionship with similar lonely heart. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411865**

SARAH 25 petite slim attractive blonde student, enjoys keeping fit, looking good, socialising, going out, being a mum WLTM similar fun genuine guy. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411537**

JULIE attractive outgoing female with a very young attitude, loves running, living life, travel, WLTM someone special to make my life complete, hope you're out there. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411513**

LINDA 37, green eyes, attractive, bubbly size 12, enjoys cosy nights in, text chats, seeking tallish fun guy for meals out, pubs, clubs and spending quality times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411033**

WOULD you like to bounce into spring with me and onwards? Widow late 60's, enjoy most things in life, looking for someone to enjoy them with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411395**

CAROLINE 39yr old pretty blonde looking for handsome caring man to put the sparkle back into my life and make each other feel special. Call me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411891**

33YR old sick of being single working mum, OHAC, likes the simple things in life, looking for romantic, honest guy with GSOH for cosy nights in and fun nights out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411887**

CINDY 31 attractive, size 12 brown eyed blonde, new to this but sick of passing up potential soul mate so thought I wid give it a go. ACA **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411873**

RITA divorced care worker with no ties, 5ft 1ins, dark hair, enjoys meals out, cosy nights in, seeking male 45-55 with GSOH and similar interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411775**

JANET 5ft 8ins, slim 12, pretty, green eyes, brown hair, seeking male companion for friendship hopefully leading to a relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411689**

MELANIE tall curvy attractive bubbly female who loves meals out, cosy nights in with a nice wine, walking, seeks professional male with outgoing GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411509**

LYN 34yrs, pretty petite dark haired female, loves music, meals out, quiet drinks out, seeking caring male with GSOH who can make me feel special again. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410137**

CAROLINE blonde curvy very active lady who loves to socialise, countryside, seeking similar caring male for LTR and to share good times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409413**

KATIE 21yr old very attractive female who is up for most things, looking for daytime fun, no strings and discreet pls. Age/status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410573**

RACHEL 39, brown hair/eyes, 5ft 6ins, bubbly, outgoing, naughty, busty, divorced, seeks male for discreet fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410835**

SUE optimistic divorced lady with OHAC, good job, enjoys meals out, cinema, countryside, pub lunches, looking for likeminded outgoing happy male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410467**

CATHY very much a lady seeks gent up to 62yrs who would appreciate an independent professional sassy female who loves to be wined, dined and romanced. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410301**

LADY 60, size 12, easy going, likes animals, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411301**

SUSAN seeking nice male, medium build, 35, easygoing, likes music, nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 406779**

MARIE 37yrs slim attractive caring, likes meals in/out, cinema, tennis, keeping fit/ active, WLTM fun loving, reliable man for friendship leading to more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411037**

SOPHIE 27yr old nursing assistant with no ties looking for discreet adult fun times with tall attractive guy 35-42yrs. GSOH essential. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410717**

34YR single mum of 1 who loves nights out having a good time seeks similar sociable fun guy to enjoy relaxed but extremely fun relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410709**

FLOR beautiful educated European blonde, articulate, seeking similar intelligent well-mannered mature gent to enjoy socialising, conversing and quality times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408293**

RACHAEL 36yr old nurse looking to raise the temperature of reliable sincere male. I have my OACH, a single mum to 1, love gym, cosy meals, animals etc. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411045**

SUSAN 29 green eyes, dark hair, slim, looking for Mr tall dark and handsome to take me out, enjoy adult times without complications just fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410957**

Men Seeking

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FRANK 54, 5ft 10ins, blue eyes, blond hair, smoker, seeking friendship with mature female, 40-60. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412893**

JAMES, hard working single dad, late 30's seeks single mum for family days out. **Text Only 4550196**

COMPANY Director, mature, late 50's, seeking female, any age for mutually rewarding friendship, Kent/Surrey area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412819**

JOHN, 42yrs professional genuine gent seeks caring lady to treat as a princess. **Text Only 4550195**

IAN 5ft 11ins, likes rock/roll, singing, making people laugh, seeking someone special. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412799**

LOCAL man wishes to meet nice lady for fun/friendship with a view to possible relationship. Respond if interested. Sevenoaks. **Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4334837**

WRITER tall, slim, dark hair, generous, seeking broadminded lady for fun times. Any age/status. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412749**

BARRY divorced, 6ft, well built, seeking fun time girl for good times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412717**

MALE seeking friendship of mature woman, smoker. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412703**

SINGLE young lady, slim-medium build, 24-38 sought by mature male in Canterbury. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405697**

MALE 48, looking for fun loving female to enjoy outdoor activities, nights in and meals out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 392212**

JAMES young, free and single, please give me a call if interested. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412345**

EX headmaster, tall, dark, seeks adventurous lady, status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412263**

MALE 49, 5ft 10ins, likes cinema, reading, walks, seeks female in the Thanet area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412235**

BESIDE the Pointe. Literate self-possessing, legginess, kindred spirit sought by white male for elevating the bar. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412223**

45YR old male, likes poetry, seeks companion for relationship. Herne Bay area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411993**

CHIPS on the pier, walks on the beach/countryside, VGSOH, 58yrs old, fit male, seeks female for laughs and love and whatever. NE Kent. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411725**

MALE 71, 5ft 10ins, medium build, N/S, likes gardening, dogs, seeks female, 65-71 for friendship/companionship and outings. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411587**

41YR old male, dark hair, 5ft 11ins, easy going, likes music, guitar, seeking female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410411**

RETIRED male, fit, active, seeks no strings discreet meet with female, any age and size. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410343**

MALE 5ft 11ins, good-looking, athletic build, looking for discreet fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411477**

DEREK seeking female, 50-60 for company, friendship and have fun together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411433**

MALE 49, attractive, fit, spontaneous, good company, no ties, seeking likeminded lady for the road ahead, nights in and out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411309**

RAY 63, 5ft 10ins, slim, semi-retired, seeking no strings discreet meets for adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411147**

WORLD war veteran seeking happy lady with nice conversation in the Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411133**

PAUL own business, looking for daytime fun with lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411127**

DAVE 65, retired, N/S, likes gardening, music, meals out, holidays, seeks female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410971**

MALE likes outdoor life, smoker, seeking local female for cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410755**

BRIAN 70, Maidstone, seeking female, 60 plus, likes meals out, cinema, theatre, days out and cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410611**

DEREK 5ft 11ins, slim-medium build, loving, caring, seeking black lady for possible relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410511**

EARLY 50's single male, smoker, seeking likeminded female for company and to share life. Must have GSOH, like animals, walks, home made food and nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410441**

BROWN eyed white mature, handsome male, seeking black female, 18-50 for discreet no strings adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410377**

PHIL 6ft, clean shaven, blue eyes, smart, likes sports, walks, films, theatre, music, animals, GSOH, seeks female, 40-55 for fun and friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410351**

ADVENTUROUS male, mid 50's, seeks similar lady for fun and mutually enjoyable discreet relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410339**

CHRIS widower likes DIY, gardening, nights out, rock and roll, N/S, looking for LTR with female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410191**



ATTRACTIVE white gent, 48, 56ft, romantic, easy going, GSOH, seeking young lady, 60-75 for quality discreet fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410025**

DIVORCED male, seeks Oriental lady, likes animals, music, will take care of you forever. Thanet area, willing to travel. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409963**



PROFESSIONAL male, early 40's, fun loving, OHAC, seeks warm, sincere female for LTR. Animals/children welcome. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409961**

CANTERBURY mature male, medium build, GSOH, varied interests, sign language interpreter, seeks slim-medium build female, 24-42 for LTR. Single mum welcome. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405697**

PROFESSIONAL male, early 40's, fun loving, independent, OHAC, seeks warm, sincere, fun loving female for LTR. Animals/children welcome. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409745**

TALL black male, 45, likes meals out, good company, romantic, GSOH, light hearted, seeks easy-going female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409621**

RETIRED male, seeks no strings discreet meets with slim-medium build female, any age for adult fun. Dover. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409533**

MALE seeking attractive female for discreet fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409189**

MALE seeking female to love and be loved back. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408941**

FIT fellow, full of fun, 58, seeks to find fanciable lady for free and fascinating future for LTR. Find your jar half full. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405857**

CHRIS 52, slim, looking for female, 25-38, slim, 5ft 2ins plus for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408575**

DAVE 50, likes holidays, meals out, socialising, easy going, seeks female 40 plus. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408541**

RETIRED male, seeks no strings discreet meets with slim-medium build female, any age for adult fun. Medway area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408343**

MALE 67, professional, fit, 5ft 10ins, medium build, reliable, tactile, likes most things, seeks slim lady, let's go! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407855**

STEVE 6ft 4ins, OHAC, seeking relationship, outdoor type, homely, wanting mutual good relationship with sexy woman. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407835**

ANTHONY 48, athletic, enjoys country walks, seeks youthful female for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407355**

71YR old romantic, 6ft, likes life, socialising, reading, strong tea, dogs, smoker but house trained seeks mature lady needing TLC. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407277**

TALL friendly, very light hearted, single 58, seeks pretty woman for LTR, mutual selection of activities and choosing how to spend our time. Croydon. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407147**

BLACK male, looking for 1-2-1 relationship with laid back, understanding female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 406221**

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Spencer Private Hospitals are two hospitals situated in East Kent. The larger of the two hospitals is a 22 bed independent hospital situated at the QEQM Hospital in Margate, whilst the second hospital is a 4 bed independent hospital based at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. Both hospitals have a reputation for providing excellent medical and surgical facilities supported by Specialist Consultants, Specialist Nurses and Physiotherapists. We have state of the art diagnostic equipment and exceptionally high standards of nursing care.

The continuing growth of our business has resulted in vacancies for the following staff

DEPUTY THEATRE LIAISON MANAGER - MARGATE

Full Time - Hours: 37.5 - Salary: £34K - £38K

- Registered Nurse or Operating Department Practitioner
- Five years relevant experience in Theatre
- Evidence of Continual Professional Development
- Experience of managing a team
- Sound knowledge of Clinical Governance and Risk Management
- A working knowledge of CQC regulations and requirements
- Ability to manage a Theatre department

ENDOSCOPY MANAGER - MARGATE

Full Time (Part Time Considered) - Hours: 37.5
Salary: £30K - £36K pa or pro rata for part-time

- Registered Nurse Part 1 or equivalent ODP qualification
- In depth knowledge of CFPP 01-06
- Knowledge of GRS/JAG Accreditation
- Two years experience in Managerial Endoscopy role
- Skilled in all endoscopy procedures and processes
- A Working knowledge of CQC regulations and requirements

ENDOSCOPY PRACTITIONERS (RGN/ODP) - MARGATE

Full or Part time - Hours: Various - Salary: £25,000 pa or pro rata for part time

We are looking for enthusiastic, experienced, highly motivated endoscopy staff at all levels, with a flexible approach to working. Hours will include evenings and weekends

- Registered Nurse or Operating Department Practitioner
- Relevant experience working in an Endoscopy Unit
- Knowledge of research and evidence-based practice
- Experienced in Recovery and Anaesthetics
- Skilled in scope cleaning and decontamination processes
- Able to assist in therapeutic procedures
- Data collection ICT skills
- Ability to assess, plan and evaluate patient care

To discuss these opportunities, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:
Vicky Smith, Quality Assurance Lead Nurse on 07477 823969

CLOSING DATE FOR ALL THE ABOVE POSITIONS - 28/11/2014

For a job description and application form please visit www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers
Alternatively, please contact Jo Wright, Senior HR Assistant. Telephone: 01304 245961
E-mail: recruitment@spencerhospitals.com

Spencer Private Hospital is an equal opportunity employer.
This position is subject to a Disclosure and Barring check.

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Westlands SCHOOL
Westlands Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent. ME10 1PF
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SCIENCE TECHNICIAN

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35 hours per week, term time only
Salary starting at £16,468 - £17,302 pa (pro-rata)
(equal to £12,846- £13,497)

We seek to appoint a suitably qualified Science Technician to join our team of staff who are responsible for providing technical support in science subjects (KS3, KS4, A Level, BTEC) and to coordinate the use of practical resources and facilities in the Science Department.

Applicants should have knowledge of COSHH and relevant science qualification. Previous experience of working in a Science department, School or commercial laboratory would be useful.

Duties will include:

- running trials of experiments prior to classes and then demonstrating techniques for experiments;
- preparing equipment and chemicals before lessons – from test tubes to microscopes;
- maintaining and repairing equipment and laboratory apparatus;
- ensuring that equipment is properly cleaned and that chemicals and other materials are appropriately stored;
- ensuring that all health and safety procedures are understood and followed correctly;

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Recruitment packs are available from Westlands School or online (www.swaleacademiestrust.org.uk). Please note, we cannot accept CVs without an application form. Closing date: 26 November 2014 (noon).

Swale Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Contact Details
Tel: 01795 477475 Fax: 01795 479461
Email swa@westlands.kent.sch.uk
Trust Principal: Mr J Whitcombe MA
Headteacher: Mr S Cox MA

Swale Academies Trust Company No 7344732
Registered Office: Ashdown House, Johnson Road, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1JS



Abbey Court School

"We grow people"

Abbey Court School provides a stimulating, challenging and safe learning environment where pupils and staff efforts, work and achievement are celebrated.

We are currently looking for a

Temporary Teacher

for pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties

January to Easter 2015 (options available) MPS/UPS + SEN

Abbey Court School is currently located in pleasant surroundings on 2 sites; Rainham (Nursery & Primary) and Strood (Secondary & Further Education), and caters for pupils aged 3-19 with Severe Learning Difficulties. The school has been judged 'outstanding' in the last 2 Ofsted inspections.

This post would suit newly qualified teachers, or those wishing to gain further experience of SEN. Comprehensive induction and training will be provided. Telephone enquiries and informal visits to the school welcomed

Due to the conditions and complex needs of the pupils at Abbey Court School, continuity and consistency of support is paramount and therefore candidates for all positions will need to commit to the full working hours of the post.

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of appointment for post is subject to a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure.

Closing Date: 28.11.2014

For further details and a job description, please contact Mrs Linda Taylor, Abbey Court School, Rede Court Road, Strood, Kent, ME2 3SP (01634 338236), stating the position for which you are applying.

To advertise in this section
0845 671 4460 & 020 8477 3720 email **appointments@kosmedia.co.uk**

Swale ACADEMIES TRUST

The Westlands School Teaching School Alliance

Westlands School, Sittingbourne Community College, Meopham School, The North School, Westlands Primary School, Regis Manor Primary School and South Borough Primary School

School Direct Teacher Training for the 2015/16 Academic Year

Swale Academies Trust, working in partnership with Canterbury Christ Church University, invites high quality graduates interested in a career in teaching to consider the School Direct Training Programme 2015/16. We have places available under both School Direct training routes, some salaried and some which may be eligible for a training bursary or scholarship, subject to status.

Information about training and the application process is available on our website:
www.swaleacademiestrust.org.uk

Swale Academies Trust has an excellent reputation for high quality teacher training within a friendly and supportive environment. Professional help is given to successful applicants to enable them to begin teaching classes at the earliest appropriate time. This is an excellent opportunity to acquire practical teaching experience under the guidance of highly skilled and dedicated professionals. Westlands School, the lead training school, is an outstanding school as recognised by Ofsted and has recently been awarded Teaching School status.

For preliminary enquiries please email the Staff Development Leader at schooldirect@westlands.kent.sch.uk.

Only applications made through UCAS Teacher Training, www.ucas.com/teacher-training will be accepted.

Swale Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All staff are subject to an enhanced DBS check.

National Teaching School designated by National College for Teaching & Leadership

Canterbury Christ Church University

Swale Academies Trust Company No 7344732 Registered Office: Ashdown House, Johnson Road, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1JS

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SPEECH & LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS TEACHER (SLCN)

(Full-time/Job Share)

Salary depending on experience and expertise

We are seeking to appoint a dynamic and creative Speech & Language Teacher to work from the Academy to provide outreach to our local nurseries for this exciting new post. The appointed person will take a lead role in developing early identification and provision across each setting. Initially, this will be a temporary post from January 2015 to July 2015 and we anticipate it will become a full-time permanent post. It would suit someone looking for a full-time post or a job share.

The successful candidate will need to be motivated, innovative, flexible and have a proven track record of working with children with a wide range of needs, as well as a comprehensive understanding of SLCN programmes within a mainstream and early year's setting.

For further details, application form or an informal discussion with the Principal, please contact Mrs D Hogben, PA to the Principal at Millbank Road, Kingsnorth, Ashford, Kent TN23 3HG

Email: dhogben@thejohnwallisacademy.org
or telephone (01233) 652627

The closing date for applications is 12 noon on Monday, 1st December 2014

Interviews will take place week commencing Monday, 8th December 2014

The Academy is committed to Safer Recruitment Procedures. Appointment to these positions is subject to an enhanced DBS (formerly CRB) check.

The Diocese of Canterbury | Canterbury Christ Church University | Kent County Council

Spencer PRIVATE HOSPITALS

Spencer Private Hospitals are two hospitals situated in East Kent. The larger of the two hospitals is a 22 bed independent hospital situated at the QEQM Hospital in Margate, whilst the second hospital is a 4 bed independent hospital based at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. Both hospitals have a reputation for providing excellent medical and surgical facilities supported by Specialist Consultants, Specialist Nurses and Physiotherapists. We have state of the art diagnostic equipment and exceptionally high standards of nursing care.

The continuing growth of our business has resulted in vacancy for the following staff:

SENIOR PHYSIOTHERAPIST - MARGATE

FULL TIME Hours: 37.5 per week Closing date: 05/12/2014

Salary: £32k - £35k

Qualifications and Experience:

- Diploma/Degree in Physiotherapy State Registration
- 3–5 years post graduate experience, including core rotations at junior level
- Experience of managing people
- Able to demonstrate a holistic approach to patient management
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- Ability to work weekends

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:
Adebayo Tijani, Physiotherapy Manager, on 0747 9987931

For a job description and application form please visit
www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers

Alternatively, please contact **Jo Wright, Senior HR Assistant**

Telephone: **01304 245961** E-mail: recruitment@spencerhospitals.com

Spencer Private Hospitals is an equal opportunity employer. This position is subject to a Disclosure and Barring check.

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We Require:

Full-time Support Workers
– 35 Hours Per Week
excluding sleeping in duties when required.

Support Workers
to work in a residential care home for adults with a learning disability.

Applicants must have some experience in care work or preferably have (NVQ 2 or 3) .Experience and training in care work would be an advantage. Applicant must be mature, caring, and committed with a kind, supportive attitude.

For all enquiries telephone 01474 354212

Closing date 2nd December 2014 for received applications.

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BRADSTOW SCHOOL

Bradstow is a creative and unique residential school for children between the ages of 5 & 19. It is situated in 13 acres of parkland just a few hundred metres from the sandy beaches of Broadstairs. We seek to meet the needs of children and young people with autism and severe learning difficulties with associated behaviours that may be challenging. We have achieved national recognition for our developments in Communication and Behaviour Management.

DEPUTY HEAD OF CARE

A Deputy Head of Care is required to lead and supervise the childcare provision of the registered children's home for the children and young people who currently attend Bradstow School. The successful candidate will have proven managerial and leadership skills, and a knowledge of supporting children and young people with learning disabilities, autism and associated challenging behaviours.

The Deputy Head of Care will be a member of the Senior Leadership Team and will contribute to the continuous improvement of the school and actively promote and model the vision, values and mission of the school community.

The successful candidate will have achieved QCF Level 5 (Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children and Young People Services), or equivalent, or a willingness to successfully complete within 18 months of commencement of employment.

£34,894 - £37,578 pa (plus sleeping in allowance) – 41 hours per week.
Term Time Only, plus 2 weeks.

HOUSEPARENT - CHILDCARE

Working as part of the childcare team, this role involves providing care and support to students mornings, evenings and weekends being a student's Keyworker and some management responsibility.

£19,817- £22,443 pa - 41 hours per week (including split shifts and weekends)
– Term time only, plus 2 weeks*

LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANTS (TEAM SUPPORT WORKERS – EDUCATION)

The successful applicants will be responsible for assisting teachers in the school, for which previous experience is required:

£12,816 - £13,609 pa - 37½ hours per week, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Mon-Fri
- Term time only, plus 2 weeks*

(INDIVIDUAL LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANTS)

The successful applicants will be responsible for assisting teachers in the school, no previous experience is required, full training will be provided:

£11,596 - £12,111 pa - 37½ hours per week, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Mon-Fri
- Term time only, plus 2 weeks*

TEAM SUPPORT WORKERS – Residential Care

As part of the childcare team, these roles involve providing care and support to the children and young people in childcare teams mornings, evenings and weekends. These roles are aimed at candidates with some experience of Care work.

£14,013 - £14,880 plus 10% pa - 41 hours per week, (including weekends)
- Term time only, plus 2 weeks *

CHILDCARE SUPPORT ASSISTANTS

As part of the childcare teams, these roles involve providing care and support to the children and young people mornings, evenings and weekends. No experience required, full training will be given.

£11,286 - £11,784 plus 10% pa – 36.5 hours per week, (including weekends
– more hours available) - Term time only, plus 2 weeks*

FLEXIBANK TEAM SUPPORT WORKERS

To provide additional support a cover within either the classrooms or residences.

Flexi-bank - £7.26 per hour – **When required**
(up to 41 hours per week including split shifts and weekends)

COMMUNICATION FACILITATOR

To provide support to the Speech and Language Therapist and create, organise, deliver and monitor all Makaton signing training to staff.

£15,992 - £17,704 pa - 34 hours per week, Mon-Fri - Term time only, plus 2 weeks*

***For these roles there will also be up to a maximum of two weeks for the school's respite care provision if required, for which extra payment would be paid.**

For all posts we look for candidates who are mature, warm, creative and open to learning with a patient and caring attitude to deal sensitively with vulnerable children.

We are committed to sustainability and preserving the environment and therefore encourage applications by email, so for an application form and information pack please email personnel@bradstow.wandsworth.sch.uk.
Or you may call 01843 608727 (24 hour recruitment answer machine).

Please note that CVs will not be considered.

The closing date for all applications is 5pm, Thursday 4th December 2014.

LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 that the Maidstone Borough Council proposes to dispose of the freehold interest in approximately 16 sq. metres (19 sq. yards) of land at Button Lane, Bearsted.

Further details of this disposal may be obtained from the office of the Head of Finances and Resources, Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6JQ, where the plan may be inspected during normal office hours.

Objections to this proposal should be sent in writing to the Head of Finances and Resources at the above address, not later than 15th December 2014.

Paul Riley
Head of Finances and Resources
Dated 16th November 2014.



PLANNING

Folkestone Hythe & Romney Marsh Shepway District Council

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2010

The following applications have been submitted for consideration by the Council:

Y14/1286/SH - East Cliff House Radnor Cliff Crescent Folkestone Kent CT20 2JQ - Felling of a Pine tree situated within a conservation area followed by the planting of replacement shrubs

Y14/1294/SH - 9 Tower Gardens Hythe Kent CT21 6DG - Works to trees situated within a conservation area comprising felling of three Prunus (T2, 5, and 7), one Conifer (T6) and one Sycamore (T8); crown reduce, thin and clean one Prunus (T1); crown reduce one Holly (T3) and one Prunus (T4) and crown clean and formative prune one Cedar (T9).

Y14/1295/SH - Stowaway Cottage Madeira Road Littlestone New Romney Kent - Felling of a Leyland Cypress and a Lawson Cypress situated within a conservation area followed by replacement planting

Y14/1296/SH - 5 Tower Gardens Hythe Kent CT21 6DG - Re-pollard back to previous pollard points of four Lime trees situated within a conservation area

Y14/1287/SH - 10 Radnor Cliff Folkestone Kent CT20 2JN - Erection of a replacement rear conservatory, re-roofing of existing garage structure and garden studio and other external alterations.

Y14/1288/SH - 10 Radnor Cliff Folkestone Kent CT20 2JN - Listed building consent for the erection of a replacement rear conservatory, re-roofing of existing garage structure and garden studio and other internal and external alterations.

Y14/1275/SH - Hawkhurst West Lawn Gardens Sandgate Folkestone Kent - Felling of eight Conifers, 3 Eucalyptus and one Bay tree, all situated within a conservation area, and followed by the planting of replacement trees

Y14/1255/SH - 1 Malthouse Hill Hythe Kent CT21 5BW - Retrospective planning application for a change of use of the building from Class C3 (dwelling) to C1 (Hotels/ Guest House)

Y14/1057/SH - Regency Cottage Sandgate Esplanade Sandgate Folkestone Kent - Outline application (with all matters reserved) for the erection of a detached bungalow dwelling.

Y14/1285/SH - Land Adjoining Hide N Seek Stone Street Stanford South Kent - Erection of a pair of two bedroom holiday cottages and associated external works

Y14/1270/SH - Tolsford House The Street Postling Hythe Kent - Works to trees situated within a conservation area comprising the felling of an Ash and 5 metre reduction in height of a Sycamore

Y14/1196/SH* - Timber Batts Inn School Hill Bodsham Ashford Kent - Change of use of existing pub/restaurant to use as a single dwellinghouse

Y14/1266/SH - Land Adjoining 24 Hythe Road Dymchurch Kent - Erection of a detached two storey dwelling plus room in the roof, together with associated parking and landscaping.

Representations can be made in writing either on line on the Council's website, by email to planning@shepway.gov.uk or in writing to the Head of Planning and Environmental Health, Shepway District Council, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2QY. Please always quote the application reference number. Comments should be made in writing within 21 days from the date of publication. Please note that any representations received will be publically viewable on the Council's website.

Some applications can be viewed at other locations in addition to the Civic Centre, Folkestone. The applications are marked as follows:

\# - The One Stop Shop, Magpies, Church Approach, New Romney

\+ - Hythe Town Council Offices, Stade Street, Hythe

The applications marked (*) do not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated.

Note: This is not a full list of applications received. All planning applications can be viewed and comments made online at http://searchplanapps.shepway.gov.uk/online-applications/.

C Lewis, Head of Planning and Environmental Health
Shepway District Council

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www.kentinvictachamber.co.uk

Stones march on after cup triumph

Striker Frannie Collin scored both goals in the 2-1 victory



FA CUP: The team is one step closer to getting their hands on the cup

Football

By Jamie Weir

jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

MAIDSTONE United earned themselves a shot at Wrexham in the second round of the FA Cup after beating Stevenage in a shock 2-1 win.

The first round replay saw the Stones take an early lead in front of a sell-out crowd of 2,226.

Stones striker Frannie Collin managed to convert a chance when an errant rebound came his way in the second minute.

But Stevenage rallied after the goal despite an early onslaught from Maidstone.

Boro even came close to drawing level when striker Lee Barnard was denied a guided header by Stones' keeper Lee Worgan.

And when the two teams came back on to the pitch for the second half, a revived Boro managed to equalise just two minutes in.

The team drew level with the Stones when striker Darius Charles beat the keeper with a scorching volley from 12 yards out.

However, it wasn't to be Stevenage's night at the Gallagher Stadium.

Collin managed a second goal for the Stones, heading a cross in from substitute Ben Greenhalgh during the dying moments of the game.

That winning goal brought the 27-year-old's tally for the 2014 season to 16.

The final whistle saw a pitch invasion, as passions spilled over from jubilant Stones' fans, elated at their team's victory.

And it brought support from some high profile football lovers too.

Maidstone and the Weald MP and sports minister Helen Grant and Chatham MP Tracey Crouch both tweeted their congratulations to the club.

Striker Frannie Collin kept his feelings short, tweeting: "Well, I've had worse Thursdays I suppose."

The giant-killing win was against the odds for the Ryman Premier League side who are 60 places and three divisions below Stevenage in the league pyramid.

The game itself had a historic edge as the first FA Cup match to be played on a 3G pitch.

And it was a good payday for the Stones as well, with the team looking at pocketing £150,000 from the run.

The win will now see the team progress into the next round of the FA Cup where they will travel to Wales to face Wrexham on December 6.

Invicta Dynamos make new forward signing

INVICTA Dynamos forward Brad Gutridge has secured a full time roster spot with the Mos for the remainder of this season's campaign after impressing the team's head coach Kevin Parrish.

His five appearances with the Gillingham team have seen the player step up in class convincing Parrish to take him on full time.

Gutridge has been playing for the Invicta Mustangs in the NIHL South Division 2, joining the team in 2009.

Since then, his grit and determination have seen him become a key player for the side.

However, at the start of the 2014-2015 season, Mos coach Parrish called him up to the first division, inviting him to take to the ice with the Dynamos.

Gutridge responded positively, stepping up to the challenge in the top league with strong, energetic performances when playing.



KEVIN PARRISH: Bringing fresh talent through the ranks

Head coach Parrish said, "Brad is going to step up with us full time now from the Invicta Mustangs.

"He still has a few things to work on and he knows that himself but you've got to consider that he's only been playing for a few years so he's doing very well."

Gutridge will play in the number 46 shirt for the Mos.

He'll next be in action in the forthcoming English Challenge Cup double header weekend.

It will begin with the Dynamos travelling to Bracknell hoping to repeat the team's earlier giant killing of the Bees.

On Sunday they'll return to the Silver Blades Stadium in Gillingham to face the high flying Guildford Flames.

Sport Shorts

» Email **sports@kosmedia.co.uk** or call **Jamie Weir** on **01233 653481**

Ebbsfleet keeper Hall does England proud

EBBSFLEET United's keeper, Brandon Hall, helped the England C team to their 4-2 victory against Estonia on Tuesday.

The 20-year-old keeper had been called up at the last minute, following Fleet's 3-0 victory over Farnborough.

He remained in goal for almost the full match in front of the 2,388 strong crowd for the International Challenge Trophy at The Shay in Halifax.

It was a performance the England C team needed after they lost to Slovakia and Turkey in their first two group games.

He became the third Ebbsfleet goalkeeper to earn an England cap, following in the footsteps of Lance Cronin and Preston Edwards in representing his country.

Hall called the England call up an honour, saying he had been thrilled by the news.

He said of his time with the England C squad: ''What an incredible experience the last few days have been something I'll never forget.''



EBBSFLEET FC: Hall's usual stomping ground



SPITFIRE GROUND: Kent cricketing duo take major awards

Kent cricket sees two awards for young stars

TWO Kent County Cricket Club players have awarded prizes to honour their work in cricket.

Spin bowler Adam Riley won the Brian Johnston Memorial Trust Spin Bowling Award after his first full season in county cricket.

He took the accolade – named after the BBC cricket commentator – for his outstanding bowling over the last season.

And Kent and England women's cricketer Tammy Beaumont won a special honour at the Chance to Shine Annual Awards.

Beaumont, who volunteers as an ambassador for the Chance to Shine charity – the country's largest school sports charity -– was recognised for her dedication to cricket by winning the Ambassador of the Year award.

The 23-year-old said: ''It's very nice to be recognised for giving something back to cricket.

''If I have got one child enjoying cricket by the end of the session, that's what gives me a boost. That's the reason I do it.''

Medway set for knock-out night

MEDWAY should get set to see fists flying as boxing returns to the area early next year.

Local promoter Joe Elfidh, who runs the Box2Win gym in Rochester, plans to organise the fight night in the New Year.

He made the announcement on Twitter, stating that a 'show is coming to Medway soon.'

A former pro-boxer, turned manager and promoter, Elfidh has a number of local fighters in his stable.

He has said that kent boxers should not have to travel to London to get their careers going.

Southern area lightweight champion Alan Dingsdale, who lives in Hoo, has been talked about to take top billing on the night.

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